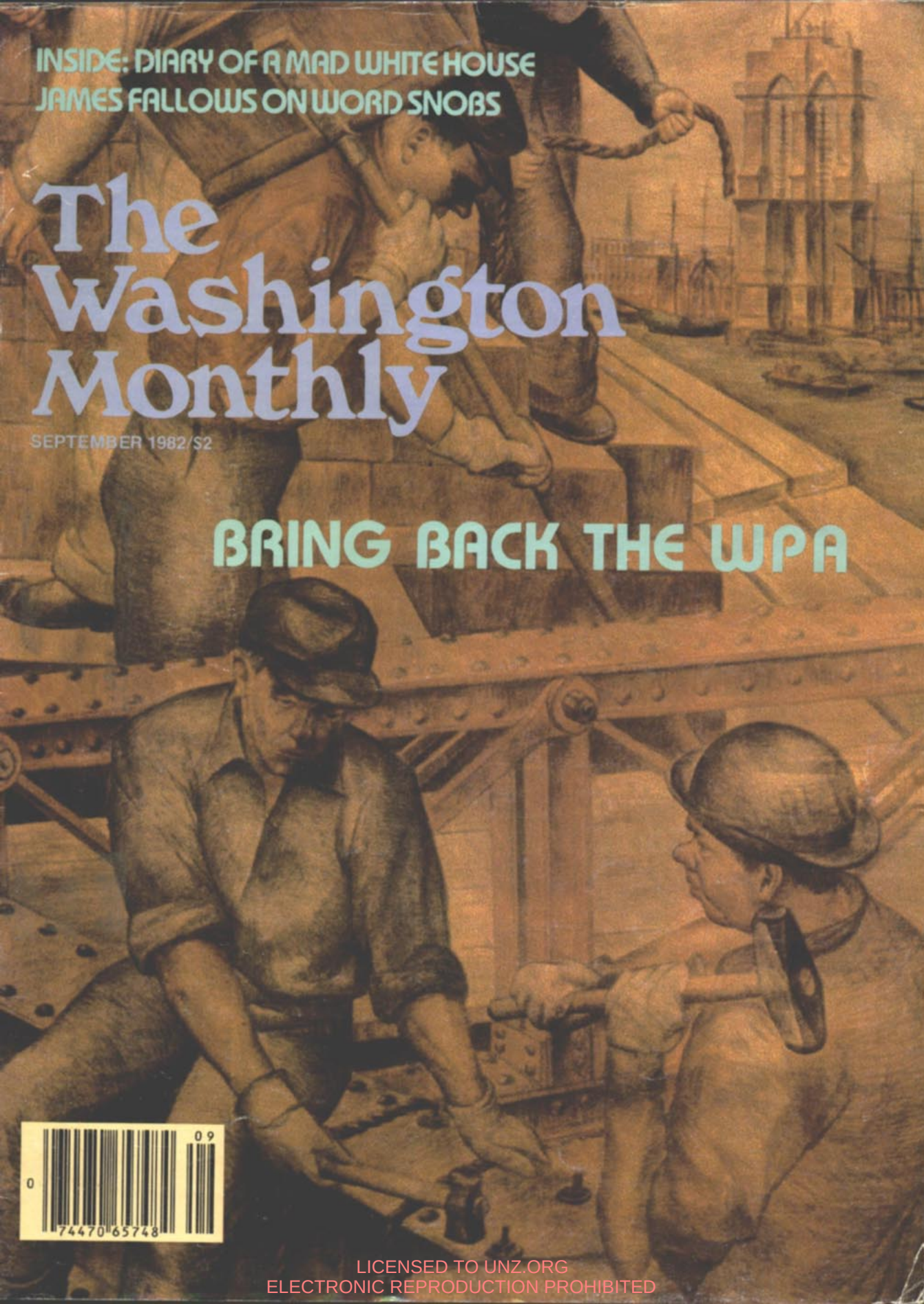
INSIDE: DIARY OF A MAD WHITE HOUSE
JAMES FALLOWS ON WORD SNOBS

The Washington Monthly

SEPTEMBER 1982/$2

BRING BACK THE WPA



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We're doing what has to be done.

Insurance Fraud.

It costs you money. It costs us money. That's why Property-Casualty insurance companies are trying to stamp it out.

What you're going to read is a story of corruption—and how it was ended. The place: Baltimore. The specific act: auto insurance fraud. By whom: a few unscrupulous doctors and lawyers who created a fraud ring, and who encouraged otherwise honest consumers to take part.

In January, 1973, a number of suspected fraudulent claims from the Baltimore area were submitted to the Insurance Crime Prevention Institute for review. An agent in Baltimore was assigned to determine if there was any substance to the allegation of fraud.

He soon noticed that the names of certain doctors appeared in a remarkably large number of insurance claims for bodily injuries sustained in automobile accidents. As he continued his investigation, the names of certain attorneys representing "victims" of accidents began appearing with the same remarkable frequency.

Was it coincidence—or was it fraud? Only legwork could determine the truth. So the agent began the laborious process of documenting the pertinent information from hundreds of files involving these doctors and lawyers and, finally, of interviewing claimant-witnesses. Until, at last, it seemed clear that there was enough iron-clad information to warrant prosecution.

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By the summer of 1974, arrests were being made. A number of Baltimore doctors and lawyers were indicted and tried. Results: five convicted doctors served time in prison; six were fined a total of $67,000. Five lawyers were convicted of insurance fraud; two resigned their practices; two had their licenses suspended; six were disbarred.

What is the point? The policyholder benefited. According to the Insurance Crime Prevention Institute, the average Baltimore resident today pays an estimated 8% to 10% less for automobile insurance than he would have, had not ICPI cracked the fraud ring.

Property-Casualty insurance companies created the Insurance Crime Prevention Institute in 1971 to fill the need for an independent investigative agency that could collect evidence of insurance fraud for prosecution in criminal court.

ICPI agents are all former police officers, FBI agents, or postal inspectors, who have been trained as specialists in insurance fraud. They know what evidence to look for, where to find it, and how to put a case together for successful prosecution.

In its first seven years of operation, ICPI investigations resulted in more than 6,000 arrests and a conviction rate of over 90%.

It would be naive to believe that insurance fraud can be eliminated. But we know it can be reduced. We know, too, that some people feel that an exaggerated claim is "justifiable revenge" against an insurance company. In reality, it's a crime against all the people who share in the insurance pool, because it drives up the costs which ultimately must be reflected in the premiums policyholders pay.

That's why Property-Casualty insurance companies are supporting ICPI and are stepping up their own fraud-fighting activities. We think these efforts are in the best interests of our policyholders, of our business, and of our troubled society.

We're working to keep insurance affordable.

This message presented by the **American Insurance Association,** 85 John Street, NY, NY 10038

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LETTERS

Pray As You Go

I rise in opposition to Charlie Peters's comments in his June "Tilting at Windmills" column supporting school prayer. Why has this country become obsessed with amending the Constitution or passing unnecessary laws? If a child wishes to read the Bible in the morning, no one is stopping him or her. But why must we pass legislation? If a child wishes to pray, or to meditate, or to recite the Lord's Prayer, that is fine, but it is an issue to be decided at home, not in Washington.

President Reagan often talks of getting "government off the backs of the American people." How is he going to get government off my back by supporting legislation for school prayer?

MICHAEL MAURER
Teaneck, New Jersey

See "Tilting at Windmills" for the editor's reply.

Please Include an SASE

Suffice it to say that your treatment of the F-15 Eagle and the F-18 Hornet in the April issue ["35 Ways to Cut the Defense Budget," Jonathan Alter, Phil Keisling] was laden with errors of fact and unwarranted conclusions. To correct the matter involved, and draw logical conclusions from those corrections would require more words than you would welcome in a letter to the editor. Your readers should know, however, that facts demonstrating the superiority and usefulness of both the F-15 and the F-18 do exist and can be made available to anyone who contacts my office.

TIMOTHY J. BEECHER
St. Louis, Missouri

Mr. Beecher is manager of external relations for McDonnell Aircraft Company, prime contractor for the F-15 and F-18.

The editors reply:
We stand by our facts and conclusions.

Another Satisfied Customer

The June issue came yesterday and looking no further than the cover creates the reaction for this letter.

I think it stinks.

The top of the cover insinuates that senators' wives are prostitutes. I resent the hell out of that. They are not elected officials, their integrity and their public lives are not material for your public commentary or criticism, and I think you owe them, one and all, a public apology.

I, too, would like to have somebody "wake me when the recession is over." I voted for Reagan, but I don't approve of everything he does and I don't approve of everything Mr. Volcker does. At the same time, in no manner, shape, or form do I think he is asleep on the job and the inference on your cover is beyond excuse. I think he, too, deserves an apology.

LOUIS C. COHEN
Norfolk, Virginia

The Monomaniacs' Lament

Your reaction to the "monomania" in the peace movement ["Tilting at Windmills," July/August] is understandable. But single-issue citizens are a direct result of the concentrations of power and lobbying in your town. If Pentagon officials and defense contractors and government bureaucrats and military officers get to spend about 28 hours per day on their single issue (hyping a bloated and self-destructive defense budget), and if they get paid top dollar while they're doing that, what can concerned citizens do except try to focus their energies on the same single issue?

It reminds me of a limerick:

There once was a man from Albania
Who thought he had caught 'monomania';
'It hurts when I pee
'And no issues I see
'Save the single one found in my mania!'

The poor man was called ineffective,
Immature and for sure non-elective;
'Don't focus your ire
'But scatter your fire'
Was *The Washington Monthly*'s directive.

This man tried to be a good neighbor
So he tripled his efforts and labor,
Refusing to mingle
With issues just single
He took on the world as its savior.

There was only one Catch-22
In this whole new political stew
Monomania died
When the world did collide
With a dense-pak of nuclear brew.

ASA BABER
Chicago, Illinois

Fed Up: Two Views

Jonathan Alter's article concerning the Federal Reserve Board made use of the entire bag of tricks of

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"yellow journalism," including half-truths and unflattering and irrelevant photographs.

Alter begins by declaring that, even if the government managed to bring its deficit spending under control, economic problems would persist because of the policies of the Federal Reserve Board in maintaining high interest rates. Alter quietly ignores the fact that the Federal Reserve is not committed to high interest rates, only to a steady, sane growth rate of the money supply. Were government deficits to be reduced, interest rates, given the Fed's present monetary policy, would decline automatically.

Alter discusses how the Federal Reserve Board dominates members of Congress. Its source of power, he declares, is based upon its admittedly superior knowledge of economic matters. Alter believes that it would be better for Congress, with its ignorance of such straightforward economic concepts as "M1b" and velocity (which Alter calls "jargon"), to set monetary policy.

Unemployment is a necessary, temporary concomitant when an economy must adjust to changing circumstances. Providing easy credit in order to prevent it only blocks these required adjustments so that the economic problems persist and worsen.

ALFRED A. FOTE
Santa Monica, California

I commend you on your magazine. Would that it reach and be read in every home.

Mr. Jonathan Alter's excellent "Defrocking the Fed" [June] shook me from my lethargy. I've sent copies of the article to a few representatives of Congress. Please advise whether in the photo on page 13 Mr. Volcker was lighting his cigar with what is left of our American dollar.

JOSEPH GERACE
Mayville, New York

Class Wars: Readers Strike Back

With "The Class War We Can't Afford to Lose" by Phil Keisling [June] you have once again published an article that should be required reading for every lawmaker and opinion-shaper in the United States.

However, in detailing the ills of America's public school system and prescribing cures, Keisling has managed to miss its biggest malignancy. That is the big and growing educational bureaucracy. He comes close to spotting the problem when in his prescription for dealing with classroom disruption he says that "... teachers must be given far more authority to rid themselves of troublesome students. . . ." Had he said, "Teachers must be given more authority," period, he would have been closer to the mark. The way things are now, even if the perverse selection process of college "education" courses were eliminated and teachers' salaries raised substantially the good teachers would still be prevented from doing their best and would be driven from the profession by mounds of pointless paperwork and stifling and insulting rules.

GARY D. MARTIN
San Juan, Puerto Rico

Rather than contributing to solutions for the admitted problems of public education, Mr. Keisling contributes further to the problem. There is a very strong anti-union bias, the article is replete with logical inconsistencies, and the attitudes of the writer give credence to illusions and misconceptions held by a large part of the public. As a result, the observations Mr. Keisling makes that are on point will be lost on the persons most able to bring solutions. Instead the educational establishment can attack the weaknesses in the article and ignore its strengths.

The basic problem with both dismissal and merit pay is in deciding who will get either. If administrators make the decisions, merit pay will go to "Teacher's Pets," to those who do not rock the boat. Those dismissed might be the incompetent, but they might also be those who speak out or those who create administrative problems. My list of the ten worst at our institution would only partly agree with the administration's list.

He is wrong in attacking credentialing. It is no more wrong to ask that teachers be credentialed than to ask that drivers be licensed. If the licensing process produced poor drivers we would not throw it out; we would change it to correct the problem.

Accepting for the sake of argument that you do not make teachers better by paying them more, is it true that you can make them better by paying them less? Those who will stay in teaching regardless of the compensation may well be the most dedicated to the profession, yet most who stay under such conditions are not the best teachers. Right now many of the best teachers I know are leaving for greener pastures.

How does it strengthen academics to take money from the English teacher and give it to the math or science teacher? Would our schools be better off if the math teachers were paid like Reggie Jackson and the English and history teachers were given the minimum wage?

Yes, there are problems in public education. There are problems in teacher preparation, in school administration, in curriculum, in inner-city schools. But these problems will not be solved by using the private school as a model, and they won't be solved by cutting off the funds as taxpayers "revolt."

CARL E. POHLHAMMER
Pacific Grove, California

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As a parent of two adolescents enrolled in public schools, I wholeheartedly agree with Phil Keisling's recommendations on ways to improve the public schools. As an English education "specialist," I have worked with thousands of students, teachers in training, and veteran teachers over the past ten years. Frankly, I am frightened over what is and isn't happening in our public schools and teacher training programs. A book title from the radical reformist literature of the sixties aptly describes this tragic situation—"our children are dying" both intellectually and spiritually.

To warm the chill created by Keisling's article, I would like to inject a positive note. Many dedicated and competent teachers are hanging in there against almost impossible odds. I have had the pleasure of working with and knowing many of them. Unfortunately, their ranks are diminishing quickly, with few fresh recruits in sight. This situation is tragic. Quality teachers are vital to our nation's future.

I would add one codicil to Keisling's recommendation for reforms in public education - fire incompetent administrators as well. I believe that parents, teachers, administrators, college professors, educational leaders, and plain old ordinary citizens can work together to bring about needed change in public education. But it won't be easy.

FRANCES SIMONE
Hope Mills, North Carolina
and Charleston, West Virginia

Skinny on Docs

Your statements about the risks a patient faces in the hospital ["Tilting at Windmills," May] are misleading and your statements about herpes are unnecessarily alarming.

Many of the infections acquired by hospitalized patients are brewing prior to hospitalization. Those patients who succumb to a truly hospital-acquired infection are either immunosuppressed cancer patients or are debilitated by a chronic illness or other infirmity. Even most lay people know that herpes is transmitted by skin-to-skin contact and therefore know not to touch a genital eruption. Doctors automatically wear gloves when evaluating most genital lesions.

What is more disturbing is your apparent mistrust in our medical system. Perhaps you could suggest what your readers should do if they become ill.

JOEL S. KORANSKY, M.D.
Saratoga Springs, New York

Joel Koransky is a dermatologist.

The editor replies:

Pray. Don't go to the hospital unless, having diligently investigated the hospital—and your doctor's reputation—you're convinced it's absolutely necessary.

The Washington Monthly

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cover painting: Panel detail from Progress of American Industry by Charles Davis, Courtesy of Seaview Hospital, N. Y. Photo by Antonio Suarez

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TILTING AT WINDMILLS

Have you abandoned all hope that the Reaganites know what they are doing? Well, cheer up, they do know something. "They are the best-informed administration on wine in this century," says "Wine Briefs" in the *American Bar Association Journal.* The article also says that "the selection of wine for formal White House functions is now serious administration business." Now you know why they don't have time to worry about tiresome matters like unemployment.

If you're wondering why there's a column called "Wine Briefs" in the *American Bar Association Journal,* read James Fallows's article in this issue and consider the fact that the University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business is now teaching the art of selecting wines when dining out with customers. One of the instructors is quoted by *The New York Times* as saying, "While the lack of knowledge about choosing the proper wine may not kill a business deal, selecting the proper wine leaves a lot of room to impress a client.". . .

Some of you may wonder why *The Washington Monthly* publishes so many articles exploring the various forms of snobbery. Our concern has both idealistic and pragmatic roots. We're against snobbery because we're for democracy, for finding ways to bring people together instead of separating them into classes. We also have a very practical desire to see this country work. And it doesn't seem likely to work very well when its businessmen waste time worrying about impressing one another with their knowledge of wine instead of worrying about the quality and usefulneess of their product, the efficiency with which they produce it, and the competitiveness of its price. The brighter the person, the more costly it is for the rest of us when he wastes time on snobbery. And educated Americans are wasting a truly frightening amount of time either putting down others or living in a state of inner panic that others will put them down because they've used the wrong word, ordered the wrong wine, praised the wrong book, suggested the wrong restaurant, or visited the wrong Greek island. The time wasted is time taken away from real communication with others, whether about individual human problems or vital issues facing the nation and the world. Snobbery may be at its most dangerous when it counsels that one of those vital issues is chic and encourages us to ignore others that are in fact of equal or greater importance. . . .

I have mentioned my suspicion that one reason for Reagan's lack of urgency in dealing with recession is that it presents no problems for his rich California friends. Now comes new evidence from Mark Nelson of the *San Jose Mercury News.* Nelson begins his report with an interview with one Jeff Loose, who sells Lotus and Ferrari motor cars. He says the "big-ticket" cars ($55,000 to $110,000) are moving as well as ever, and offers as evidence his python-skin cowboy boots ($500), his diamond-studded Rolex President watch ($10,000), his 14-karat gold bracelet ($5,500), and the gold ring he wears that has a giant red stone in the center.

"We're doing well enough for me to afford all the toys. Well enough for the townhouse, the home in Lake Tahoe, the off-shore power boat, lots of skiing, a vacation every month. The works."

"The real big shots are so wealthy they're just living off the 12- or 13-percent in their money market funds," Loose says.

"Houses over $800,000 are moving at a very healthy pace. I think that's because these people don't have to borrow money at 18 percent to buy them," one real estate broker

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tells Nelson. Last summer the broker says, it took only four months to sell a custom-made home in Woodside listed for $3.1 million. "The man who bought it didn't borrow a penny. He had the cash in a liquid-asset account. I couldn't believe it."

Jewelers tell Nelson that in recent months more and more people have bought big-ticket items on a whim. Steven Graham, who sold a $16,000 ring just before he was interviewed, says sales of expensive jewelry are making up for the slack buying of items less than $1,000.

"The same," writes Nelson, "holds true for swimming pools. According to Graham Shepard, owner of Royal Pools in Palo Alto, only the high-line pools are selling as well as they did last year. There's been about 30-percent less demand for the more moderate pools costing below $20,000. During pre-recession times, the top-of-the line pools accounted for just 20 percent of Shepard's business. Now, these tailor-made pools, which cost up to $30,000, make up half of his dealings. 'The recession might be affecting rich people somewhere down the line, but it's sure not making a difference with buying pools.' Shepard said.". . . .

Speaking of the San Jose papers, I have an apology to make to one of their reporters, Philip S. Trounstine, whom I blamed in our May issue for an error about the expense accounts of the mayors of San Francisco and San Diego. The error was mine. I misread his story and it was ungenerous of me not to take complete responsibility for the mistake. . . .

Before we leave San Jose, a story from the *News* there reminds me of one of the new insanities of American political life. The story recites that "despite a shrinking budget that has required layoffs of county employees, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors has decided to spend $18,000 for office renovations for its Sacramento lobbyists."

The office renovation is bad, but what's really wrong here is that Santa Clara has lobbyists at all. What are the state legislators from Santa Clara doing in Sacramento? Shouldn't the voters replace them if they are not adequately representing the county's interests? Why pay for lobbyists? It's crazy, but it's a trend that began in the sixties, gathered a lot of steam in the seventies and today has Washington full of lobbyists for state and municipal governments. . . .

I do not support Strom Thurmond's school prayer amendment (see "Letters"). I do support a daily period of silent meditation in the schools, during which the pupil can silently pray or otherwise contemplate the meaning of it all. I am not the least disturbed that some of this time will surely be devoted to less profound matters ranging from sports to sex, or that some of it will be devoted to religion. What I want to do is find a constitutional way of respecting the wishes of a vast number of fellow citizens who want a time to pray, and my own instinct is that a moment's silence is a golden event in any day.

My best guess is that the constitutional way is not a constitutional amendment but a good lawyer to defend the first teacher to permit meditation. And just to make sure you won't misunderstand my position, I would favor dismissal for any teacher who sought to convert the meditation period into an exclusively religious occasion. . . .

Remember when Reagan inadvertently leaked the news of Murray Weidenbaum's resignation? He did it while taping an interview on a CBS station in St. Louis, but the news was not broadcast for another two hours. Why the delay, a curious reporter asked a CBS source, who replied, "I'm never sure Reagan knows what he's talking about.". . .

In one of the rare cases where the Army tried to do something about bid-rigging by its contractors, the federal courts have rushed to protect the guilty. A contractor that had plead nolo contendere to antitrust charges of bid-rigging was denied the right to bid on a new army contract. But Judge Charles Richey ruled that barring a company from getting government work is not proper punishment for bid-rigging. The punishment seems just right to me. The problem with such rigging is widespread, not only among defense contractors but in bidding by other government contractors at the federal, state and local level. The highway construction industry was recently caught doing it in Virginia and in Nebraska; federal grand jury has indicted three firms in connection with bid-rigging on highway projects there. . . .

The Defense Department is trying to get rid of a regulation that requires employees who move back and forth between the Pentagon and its contractors to report their moves on a single form designed to reveal whether conflicts of interest exist.

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Lawrence Korb, the assistant secretary concerned, says the costs of regulation outweigh the benefits.

Florence Graves of Common Cause interviewed Korb and asked: "Just how costly is the regulation?"

Korb replied, "I'd say it's considerable because we had in 1980 something like 1,266 individuals who filled out the forms. You're talking about a tremendous amount."

Graves: "How much money are we talking about?"

Korb: "Again, it depends on whether you're talking about direct or indirect [costs]. I would say it costs the government several million dollars a year for all of the things involved in this report."

Graves: "But you are just guessing."

Korb: "Well, it's an estimate. If you want to get down and talk about from start to finish, processing the paper, mailing the things out, having them come back in, being compiled, Xeroxed, reproduced and sent over [to Congress], I would say it probably costs the taxpayers several million dollars."

Graves: "But you don't know for sure."

Korb: "Well, my figures are as good as anybody else's who's commented on this thing."...

Have you heard about the new magazine, *Physician's Travel & Meeting Guide*? It was started by Steven D. Salinger of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands, who, according to *The New York Times*, "was inspired by the constant invasion of his home island by meeting-going doctors." The guide will list the 5,000 tax-deductible conventions, meetings, and symposiums that take place every year, listing them, the *Times* says, "by specialty, by locale, by date, and by the all-important recreational activity."...

If physicians don't want to be bothered with itemizing their deductions, they simply can bill some medical institution that knows how to pass on the expense to the taxpayer. For example, if you live in New York City you recently learned from the *Daily News* that you have paid for trips to Hawaii and Sweden by doctors from New York Medical College....

With this kind of thing going on all the time, it is understandable that doctors have a strong interest in avoiding the public scrutiny involved in the attention of the regulatory agencies. And if they are not willing to pay for their trips, they certainly are willing to pay to avoid regulation. Congressional sponsors of legislation to exempt physicians from the rules of the Federal Trade Commission have, according to Ralph Nader's Congress Watch, received more than $1.1 million from the American Medical Association, the American Dental Association, and the American Optometric Association....

When the Penn Square Bank went under, you probably read that Chase Manhattan lost millions and that as a result two senior executives and seven of its lower-ranking officers were fired. What you may not have read is that in the two days before it closed, Penn Square got $26 million from another prudent banker, the Federal Reserve. But we haven't heard of anyone being fired at the Fed....

The Legal Services Corporation is in many ways a praiseworthy organization, but in one way, at least, it has turned out to be just like the other bureaucracies. Remember how it was complaining about being starved for funds? Well it recently discovered, according to Ronald Ostrow of *The Los Angeles Times*, that it had $41 million in funds left over from fiscal 1981. This was 20 percent of its budget. Ronald Reagan, who is no fan of the agency, will for sure be delighted. One hopes, however, he will realize that such poor-mouthing is typical of bureaucracies generally, and that the worst offender of all is the Pentagon....

If you've been wondering about your chances in case of one of those chemical disasters, consider this report by Olga Wickerhauser of *The Charleston Gazette:*

"It's midnight. A tanker truck loaded with 22,000 gallons of chlorine swerves on a patchy two-lane highway to avoid an on-coming car and overturns. The large tank ruptures, and chlorine begins to seep onto the road and down an embankment into a creek.

"Whether a potential disaster is checked within minutes, or whether it develops into tragedy depends on factors like luck, weather, or the chance expertise of a local police officer.

"It's a flip of a coin. It's luck. It's all 'ifs,'" says Bill White, Kanawha County Emergency Services Director, and other state authorities and emergency response experts agree with him.

"The U.S. Department of Transportation reports that

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from 1971 to 1979 there were more than 95,000 accidents in the United States involving the transportation of toxic chemicals, which breaks down to several dozen every day.

"On any one day, according to the DOT, there are more than 75,000 different hazardous substances in transit on the nation's roads and railways. One truck out of every ten and one out of every 23 railroad cars carries a hazardous load. 'In practice,' says Dr. Enrico Quarantelli, director of the Ohio State University Disaster Research Center, 'government regulations do not address the potential dangers of transporting hazardous substances, and are ineffective in preventing accidents. . . . For example, the government says that carriers must put placards on trucks, but even if they set up roadblocks, they check maybe 20 or 30 trucks. What about the rest?'

" 'The public is left to trust private industry to make sure the chemicals are transported safely,' says a spokesman for the DOT's Federal Highway Administration. 'To a very, very large extent, we depend on the sincerity of companies and their commitment to safety regulations,' he said. 'It is really a matter of voluntary compliance on their part.'

" 'We do know that regulations are violated regularly,' Quarantelli said, and White agrees.". . .

What has happened to the Democratic party, the party of the people? This summer, while agreeing to cuts in Medicaid, a program that aids the poor, they made an all-out fight for a program that benefits the comfortable, opposing a four-percent limit the administration was trying to place on the cost-of-living increases scheduled for government retirees who are already the beneficiaries of one of the world's most generous pension programs. There was almost no criticism of this from the normally liberal-leaning staffs of our great newspapers. One explanation is that journalists themselves have become fellow travellers of upper-level civil servants. According to the *National Journal,* leading reporters for the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* receive similarly generous salaries: $55,000-$60,000. . . .

A Maryland legislator who is also an insurance agent runs ads for his insurance business that identify him as Delegate

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So and So. This lets those who anticipate the possibility of legislative action affecting them know exactly where they should buy their insurance. Lawyer-legislators don't even have to advertise to get this message across. The clever lobbyist always knows where to place his legal business. . . .

One of the dismaying lessons of history is how wrong people were about lowering government spending as a way to end the Depression. As late as 1932, even FDR was talking about the need to balance the budget. Worry about the deficit in the short term seems just as insane to me today. We have to spend—spend in a way designed to create maximum demand and to rebuild our infrastructure and modernize our plants so that we will be able to compete successfully in the world economy. That gamble may fail, but if we don't take it, things are sure to get worse, just as they did in 1932. And if it works and the economy gets moving, we will be able to generate enough tax revenues to keep the deficit under control in the long run, which is, after all, what is most important to the bond buyers.

I also do not agree with the idea that high taxes for the rich discourage productive enterprise. That was clearly untrue during World War II and I know of no time in our history when it clearly was true. Although they love to complain about taxes, entrepreneurs are not really motivated by what the IRS does but by the desire to win, by pride in product or company, and sometimes by pride in gross income—"I made a cool million last year." Only rarely is careful calculation of after-tax income a big factor.

Obviously, common sense tells one that taxes *could* get too high and the entrepreneur could really get discouraged and pull out. My point is that it just hasn't happened. When they do pull out it's not because of high taxes but because of lack of faith in the economy. Why else in the last year have they put their money into money market funds instead of investing in new plants and new jobs? They didn't put their tax savings into new plants because they didn't see new customers. The crucial thing is the customers. Create them and recovery will follow. . . .

One Reagan reform that makes sense to me has been proposed by Thorne G. Auchter, the assistant secretary of Labor. He wants to eliminate safety record-keeping requirements for 470,000 companies in the retail trade, and the finance, insurance, real estate, and service industries. OSHA figures show that 94 percent of these companies will have fewer than two employee injuries a year. In other ways, however, Auchter shows the intelligence we have come to expect from the Reagan administration, which may be said to have turned the upper levels of government into a National Turkey Farm. One example: he wants to have OSHA inspectors graded by the companies they inspect. . .

A recent article by Paul Jacobs of the *Los Angeles Times* reminded me of the lessons to be learned from *Lancet*, the muckraking British medical journal, lessons that American professional journals badly need to learn. *Lancet* is 1) severe in its treatment of incompetent physicians, 2) never afraid to attack the conventional wisdom, 3) written in readable, sometimes even vivid, prose, and 4) makes a deliberate attempt to understand the patient's point of view. I know of no American professional journal of which even two of these things can be said.

Ian Munro, *Lancet's* editor, also is skeptical about the experts, an attitude that I commend not just to the staffs of professional journals, but to all reporters and editors.

One experience I had before I came to journalism was invaluable in this respect. I was a trial lawyer, and as such, I had to learn to cross-examine expert witnesses. This meant that I had to learn enough about his specialty—say it was orthopedic medicine—to ask him the right questions about the lumbar one fracture involved in my case and to expose the holes in his testimony. I learned it could be done. It took hard work. It took making a fool of myself as I asked all my doctor friends about lumbar one. It took betraying vast ignorance, at least at the beginning. I think the crucial defect of most journalists today is that they lack this initial willingness to make fools of themselves in order to learn how to ask the right questions later. Nothing else can explain how the Federal Reserve and the Department of Defense have gotten away for so long with the con of "We're the experts, we know what is best, don't question us.". . . .

In connection with the snobbery problem, let me call your attention to the fact that 4.8 million men and 4.1 million women bowl at least once a week. Yet how much space does *The Washington Post*

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sports section give to bowling? "Could it be," asks Joseph M. Arena in a marvelous "My Turn" column in *Newsweek*, "because bowling is a blue-collar sport?"...

If you sometimes wonder why the press lays so few gloves on James Baker, ponder the following excerpt from a story on local tennis players in *The Washington Post:*

"Larry Barrett, *Time* magazine's White House correspondent, has a job that depends largely on good relations with administration advisors. Like a few other reporters, Barrett plays tennis with White House Chief of Staff James Baker. Does this help Barrett cover his beat?

" 'Sure, there's no question about it,' responds Barrett, whose journalistic colleagues noticed him whacking balls with Baker on Barbados, site of the president's Easter vacation. 'Tennis, like fishing or golf, is a good way to get to know people outside of a formal setting.... you're more likely to get a call back in time for deadline.' "....

On the lessons learned from the Falklands, please add that unexploded Argentine bombs may have made the difference in the crucial battle on May 21 at San Carlos Bay. "The Argentines came remarkably close to winning that battle," says John Witherow of *The Times of London*. "Much of the narrowness of the British success could be attributed to unexploded bombs." Now read this report from Stephen Barlas of the Independent News Alliance:

"Rain repeatedly soaks thousands of tons of exposed ammunition at key air force depots in Europe. Too many bombs rust....

"At Subic Bay, Philippines, one of the Navy's primary ammunition bays in the Pacific....the Navy does not know how many shells are there or what condition they are in."

Frank Greve of the Knight-Ridder papers has looked at how the Navy is facing up to the Falklands and has found that it has deceived itself and Congress about the vulnerability of its warships to modern enemy missiles. "All but ignored in Navy studies," Greve writes, "are the dangers of fires like those that have destroyed at least four British vessels in the South Atlantic war with Argentina." He quotes one top damage analyst as saying, "Most vulnerability analyses are not worth the paper they're printed on," and a retired Navy missile expert as explaining, "The analysts are paid to predict that the surface fleet is invulnerable. The guys know that if they did good studies, their shops would not be funded.".....

One very ominous fact was buried in *Newsweek's* excellent review of what went wrong with the Desert One rescue: "The seizure of the embassy had left the CIA without a single agent in Iran. The only CIA officers there were held hostage." Now think about that. All the CIA officers in Iran at the time of the seizure were in Tehran. None was out among Iranian people. Now you understand why several years ago I proclaimed "Never Leave the City Where the Good Bars Are" as the guiding rule of the CIA, of the foreign service, and of American reporters abroad....

Why do certain words seem to dominate certain periods? Think of "dichotomy" and "ambiguity" in the literary criticism of the 1950s. In the seventies, "convoluted" seemed to appear in almost every manuscript submitted to this magazine. Now it's "disparate." In the bureaucracy, values are more eternal. The number one word for at least 30 years has been "appropriate," as in "appropriate response." The reason for its popularity with civil servants is clear. It sounds as if it means something, but it really means nothing at all....

Diana McLellan has written a fascinating new book, *Ear on Washington*. She is the town gossip, but she is also one of a new breed of anthropologists, unencumbered by academic degree or by academic predilection for places like Ouagadougou and Zamboanga, who believes that there are rites and rituals worthy of study right here in the culture of Washington, D.C. An example of her findings, as she explores local kinship patterns, is the case of Senator John Tower, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee:

"Tower divorced his wife Joza Lou after 23 years of marriage and wed Lilla Burt in 1977. She is paid $57,500 a year as director of the government's Institute of Museum Services. One cannot help one's relatives, of course, but it's interesting to note that Lilla Burt's brother, Samuel Cummings, runs Interarmco, the big arms dealership based in nearby Alexandria, Virginia. British police linked Cummings with 'major international gun-runners' arrested in New York in December of 1979. A stockpile of Sten guns in England supposedly awaiting shipment to 'Latin American

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revolutionaries' was traced to his stock, but no American laws had been broken.". . .

In addition to the defense spending cuts and elimination of tax decreases and federal pension and salary increases that Timothy Noah advocates to finance the new WPA, once it gets started, the WPA itself will be increasing tax revenues. The Urban League is publicizing estimates that each percentage point subtracted from the ten-percent unemployed figure means $30 billion in new revenues for the Treasury. The League may be optimistic, but the relationship between declining unemployment and rising tax revenues is undeniable. And, of course, there are nickels and dimes that could be raised in almost every part of the federal establishment. An example:

From the fifth to the twelfth of this month, the Air Force will be displaying the B-1 bomber at the Farnsborough Air Show in England. We could save $1 million simply by not going to Farnsborough, and, incidentally, deprive Soviet spies of the opportunity to inspect "the full offensive and defensive avionics" with which, according to *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, the Farnsborough B-1 will be equipped. Or does the Air Force really not care because it knows there's nothing about the B-1 to worry the Russians? . . .

Here's an update on some items that appeared in past issues of *The Washington Monthly*:

Raymond Donovan, the secretary of Labor, who is in danger of having his confirmation hearings reopened by the Senate, has selected his real estate agent. She is Antoinette Hatfield (see *The Washington Monthly*, June), wife of the senator from Oregon.

We're always delighted to have the respectable world catch up with the *Monthly's* ideas and that has been happening quite a bit lately. Take our opposition to the insanity defense. We once manned a lonely outpost on this one, but as a result of the outrage over the Hinckley case, we now may even have a majority on our side.

On our view that the Federal Reserve can lower interest rates without causing inflation (see *The Washington Monthly*, June) we gained a significant and courageous ally in the person of Robert Ortner, the chief economist of the Department of Commerce, who had the courage to speak up against his own administration. And Joseph Kraft, who couldn't be more respectable, has adopted the view Gregg Easterbrook expressed in these pages last fall that because of the money market funds and other factors, too many influential people now have a self-interest in high interest rates. . . .

Like many others, I have had the impression that William Webster was doing a reasonably good job at the FBI, certainly in comparison to L. Patrick (I Burned Them) Gray and J. Edgar (Dirty Tapes) Hoover. But two things have disturbed me recently. One is the conviction Webster has displayed throughout the Donovan case that he has no obligation to share with the Congress information he gives to the White House. This is a common position in the executive branch, but it is wrong, exept for the rare information that truly should remain secret, like the Polaris sailing schedule. Congress is part of the government. It represents the American people just as much as the president does and has a right to know everything he knows. (Just because a Joe McCarthy comes along occasionally and misuses the information is not a reason to not provide the information, it's a reason to get rid of the Joe McCarthys.)

My other worry about Webster is his statement that groups that "produce propaganda, disinformation, and legal assistance may be more dangerous than those who actually throw the bombs." Has Mr. Webster heard of the First Amendment? . . .

According to *The Washington Post*, most of the 160 young men the government is indicting for failure to register for the draft are self-reporters, people who have written the Selective Service to explain why they didn't register. These are people of conscience. Why pick on them first? Why not go after the cynical evaders? I believe in a draft, but I believe it must appeal to the nation's idealism. Again, the Reagan administration is doing things in exactly the wrong way. . . .

Incidentally, I think our position on the draft is based on the same kind of pragmatic idealism that motivates our concerns about snobbery. The draft is practical because it can be cheap—we no longer will have to offer financial inducements to get people to enter military service, so we'll save money. But it's also idealistic. All of us—rich and poor—will do our part in the nation's defense.

—*Charles Peters*

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The Day They Stop Returning Your Calls

by Doug Bandow

Editor's note: Whenever there is a change of personnel at the upper levels of government, something happens that few people outside of government understand. The unknown impact is on the departing official's subordinates, and on what they do—or don't do—all day as a result of the change. The following article illustrates that impact, and reflects on the attitudes and values often brought to government service.

On May 14, 1982, I left the White House staff, where I served as a special assistant to the President under then-domestic policy adviser Martin Anderson in the Office of Policy Development (OPD). Anderson's decision to leave caused significant uncertainty and bureaucratic maneuvering, the flavor of which I attempted to capture in the following excerpts from the journal that I kept.

Wednesday, February 3. A number of signs over the last couple of weeks suggest that Marty [Anderson] is preparing to leave.

Spent a lot of the day checking new rumors, including one that Annelise [Marty's wife, currently an associate program director at OMB] is looking around outside government. That is likely only if Marty is planning on leaving.

As I got home, the phone was ringing. It was Marty, to tell me that tomorrow he will announce his resignation. He will talk with me and Kevin [my closest co-worker] tomorrow morning to see what we want to do.

Left me feeling the sort of uncertainty that some of my friends in other agencies, such as the NSC [National Security Council], have been feeling. What will I be doing in two months? How will my position change? Will decisions on issues worsen?

Thursday, February 4. Story in *The Washington Post*. He must have leaked his own story. I will start getting phone calls early.

As Kevin and I walked to our office, we saw an aide to Ed Meese, who asked how we were doing. Kevin said, "What can one say on such a morning." The aide replied, "Slit your throat." Not the best way to start out this morning.

A couple of OPD staffers were standing in the hallway as I entered my office looking downcast and unsure. I already had my first message, and it wasn't even 8:00. I called a friend at the Heritage Foundation to ask her about job opportunities.

Talked with a number of White House staffers, and rumor is that Ed Harper [deputy director of OMB] is to take Marty's place. Then went over to West Wing and talked with Barb Honegger [Marty's assistant]. She plans on staying. I then talked with Marty; he thought that if I wanted to stay, I'd be happy with the setup.

Day consisted mostly of taking phone calls from people who wondered about my, Marty's, and administration's future. Didn't do much work—finding out latest rumors was more important.

Talked with a conservative friend. He asked if we were "hanging out the black crepe yet."

Doug Bandow is the editor of Inquiry *magazine.*

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A colleague at the State Department called. He was interested in pushing for a White House special adviser on ocean policy and thought of me. Said they could drum up a lot of congressional and industry support for it. I thanked her, but said the issue area didn't excite me for full-time work.

One friend in town called and asked if this change meant that he couldn't eat at the White House mess any more. Hah, hah. Can't say that I find it very funny.

No work being done by anyone in OPD that I could tell today. Everyone questioning the future. But I feel particularly naked, having worked directly for Marty. The vultures will be coming.

Friday, February 5. On the way in Kevin said he talked with Ed Gray [director of OPD under Marty] yesterday. Ed is not yet sure of his plans.

Talked with one OPD person, who had worked with Harper in the Nixon administration, who said she didn't think he would take it. Then called by a colleague in OMB, who said that Harper had accepted, and the press release was being drafted. Damn. I wandered off to spread the news.

Flipped through my Rolodex pulling out cards for people to call about potential jobs. Then started down the lengthy list.

Had lunch with a reporter at Maison Blanche. These nice lunches on someone else's expense account may be coming to an end.

Frayda [my research assistant] talked with some of the people at State. They think they might be able to work something out for her.

Heard that Gray's assistant held up distribution of the press release on Harper to OPD staffers because she thought it was critical of the current staff. How silly. Immediately went off to track it down.

Everyone is desperate for information. Spent almost four hours on the phone today. Virtually no work was done—but Marty and Gray didn't seem to notice.

Monday, February 8. Wandered by to talk to Ronald Frankum [Gray's deputy]. He may go to State, and is also exploring private sector opportunities. He thinks Harper will clean house. Frankum was not wearing a suit—in fact, hasn't since the decision was announced.

Then went by to talk with Ed [Gray]. He was looking at the "plum book" when I dropped by. He'd made no decision, though had a number of possibilities. He felt he couldn't stay in his position.

Went back to my office. As I walked by open offices of OPD, no one seemed to be doing much of anything.

Called Marty's assistant to see when I should drop by to talk with him. Nothing on his schedule, so went by to see him. He was in a very relaxed mood. Not surprisingly, he offered little hope of something else in another part of the White House. He did not attempt to dissuade me from leaving.

Talked with one OPD staffer who's very worried. I told him supposedly no wholesale changes planned. It makes sense for Harper to wait to see who leaves.

Tuesday, February 9. On way back from lunch, ran into David Gergen [communications director] in front of the White House. He asked what I planned on doing, asked me to talk with him before I decided to leave. Said I would.

Frayda talked with some people and was told that Harper supposedly bringing in a deputy from California.

An OMB person came by and asked if I had thought about doing job of associate program director for the health and human services area. Billions of dollars to monitor, and 57 to 60 professional staff. I said I would be very interested.

Wednesday, February 10. Talked with an OPD staffer. One rumor is that Ed Gray may keep his office doing something else. But another person said Ed just sent over a bunch of things for framing, as if he was getting ready to leave.

Over to West Wing and talked with Barb. Marty to make her a presidentially commissioned officer. Talked with another aide who called. Said nothing decided, and called this place "piranha heaven."

Later talked with a couple friends who hadn't even heard about Marty's decision. What a different world we all live in.

To lighten the atmosphere, Frayda put out a list of suggested rumors. Most are as valid as what we've been hearing.

Thursday, February 11. Word came around that Harper wanted all of our resumes. Did it up and left it with the OPD administrative person. Her desk was covered with resumes, and hers was in the typewriter.

As left for the evening, ran into the OMB staffer who'd asked me about the associate program directorship. They talked with Stockman a half hour before, and he felt I was too young. But he is interested in having me at OMB.

Friday, February 12. Gray came by the office suite and, despite the cold weather, took Kevin out on

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the balcony for a talk. A job, maybe? Kevin later told us that Gray just patted him on the back and said everything would be OK. They went outside in the cold for that? We're all very suspicious.

Called Meese's office to make appointment to talk on job opportunities. Went by West Wing to see Gray. Asked if he had found anything—he said not yet. Asked if a possibility around here. He said yes, should find out next week. Is playing cards close to his chest.

Had lunch with friend from Labor Department. I got him worried when I mentioned that Donovan was in some trouble. Thought everyone was aware of that.

Wednesday, February 17. Talked with OPD staffer who talked with Harper yesterday. Harper said major changes are coming in the way policy decided.

Several of us laughed over a colleague in OPD who yesterday said he "didn't have time" to keep up with some magazines. What else was there to do?

Friday, February 19. Went by for Harper meeting. Canceled—Emily forgot to call me. She asked if I'd be in tomorrow. Said no. She'll call me on Monday. I don't plan on coming in on Saturday for that, and feel no desire to try to impress him with my dedication.

Monday, February 22. Talked with one of my OPD colleagues who met with Harper. This person first said he wouldn't work for Harper. Now he says he will see if he can stay. His mortgage payment must be getting to him.

Meeting with Harper was reset for today. He was cordial and reassuring, but also fairly uninformative. We discussed different issue areas for me.

He also asked me my plans. He said he hopes I'd stay on; he thought I'd made valuable contribution. But he understands people wanting to leave, and is willing to write a recommendation to help. I felt a bit reassured.

Thursday, February 25. On way in, Kevin said Frayda talked with Emily [Harper's assistant]. She said she couldn't figure out what our office did. Wonderful. Also, floor plans being readied—we are undoubtedly about to be kicked out. Oh well.

Later told by a friend that one high-ranking assistant to the President on the "Baker side" of the White House, was heard to say that several people no longer belong in OPD, including the current director and deputy director, Kevin and myself. Rather chilling. But frankly true.

Went to Marty's going away party. The latest rumor is that Roger Porter [then in charge of economic affairs] is to be Harper's deputy. Kevin said it fits; Porter was talking with Emily late yesterday. Funny—lots of people crowding around to talk with Emily. The new conduit to power. Some getting their photo taken with her. A little much.

Friday, February 26. Final day of Anderson era. Spent much of day calling around to give away tickets to the Kennedy Center. Virtually no work to do.

Newest rumor circulating is that Ed Gray is getting what he wanted—the Office of Policy Information.

Had final party for Anderson's immediate staff. Ed Gray then asked me into his office to talk. He said Marty had said I'd had a nice offer; if he'd thought I'd stay, he would want me working with his team. I said I appreciated that, though noted that nothing was final. He seemed uninterested in my caveat that it wasn't final; he moved off in other direction when I mentioned it. I understand that he may not want to or may not be able to, make me an offer. But I'd like him to say so. It hurts: I really don't want the job, since I don't want to be shunted aside in a backwater office, but I do want the offer.

Finally went to TGIF for OPD staff. Asked Dennis Kass [a Harper protege currently on OPD staff] about the rumored change for him, which he denied. Also heard that Porter was asked on the rumor earlier today, and had refused to talk about it. So probably true.

Monday, March 1. The New Order has arrived. Went over to the West Wing to check on the new arrangements. Marty's old office area in transition. Barb outside another set of offices, and Marty's other assistant was packing up boxes of old files. He didn't know his situation.

Porter came out of Harper's office and asked to see Gray. They said he was on the phone, and asked if Porter could wait a couple minutes. There was a perceptible pause before Porter said okay. The new power relationship; probably the last time Porter will wait for Gray.

Went back to my office. An OPD staffer told me that he had heard of list of people to be fired or transferred. Frayda and I were among the half-dozen to be fired; another was to be transferred to Office of Public Liaison.

I was stunned. Talked with Frayda, and her reaction was "we've been conned." If it is true, it is so outrageous—such lies. They could have been

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more honest with me. Went off to talk with close friend for advice. My initial reaction is to confront Harper with rumor, preempt him. But after hearing we'd have at least 60 days, I cooled down, rethought my strategy.

Went to OPD staff meeting. Porter to be director of OPD. A number of people becoming assistant directors of OPD—a title Marty discarded because the office doesn't direct anything. Some to do "special projects"; obviously a graveyard, as these people were on the list I was told about this morning. No one listed for a strategic planning project that Harper had told me was so important in the next two months. I'm to report to Uhlmann [legal affairs], and do Law of the Sea. Apparently nothing else. And now a couple layers below where I used to be.

Into question period. A couple people rather obviously playing up to Harper—"you're absolutely right, in my opinion." Hard to stomach. One staff member even asked to have copy of Harper's schedule each day to help better serve him.

After the meeting went up to talk with Barb [formerly Marty's assistant], who was not mentioned at the meeting. As I went up the steps, one person, who had continually rejected the idea of working for Kass when the rumor circulated of his taking over OPD, smilingly congratulated Kass on his promotion, saying it was "long overdue." So political. Barb said she was probably going to the Justice Department; apparently gone are her dreams of being a presidentially commissioned officer.

Went back to my office and discussed the meeting with Frayda and others. I'm becoming paranoid. While at the staff meeting, I thought that they could be starting firing rumors to get us to quit if they feel they really can't fire us because of political constraints.

**Realized I'd miss use of government car.
Nice way to travel.**

Barb called—she needs help in moving offices. Last week she could have gotten a half-dozen people from GSA.

Helped Barb move. She noted that people she's worked with in the past now talk to her differently—almost as if she's not there. Of course, the part of her representing the assistant to the President is no longer there. Talked with an OPD secretary who's paranoid too. Said not to discuss her job opportunity, she's at mercy of others.

Porter's office called me to meet with him. His staff now much more important, and acts so. Porter went into an extensive discussion of the need for cutbacks, and he wants to check my needs: Do we need two people working on Law of the Sea? Rather brutal. He said no decisions had been made; to talk with everyone first. But I'm the first one called in: the message is clear. He laced his conversation with "Ed Harper thinks this, and Ed thinks that." The White House game of grabbing on to the coattails of the people above you.

Later talked with staffer who said that I couldn't expect my office to sit for two months while I'm up in New York for LOS. Asked if he'd heard specifics on it. He said no, but he didn't sound real convincing.

Feel a real vortex of emotions. In earlier meeting with Harper, he said he was willing to write recommendations if I wanted to leave, but that he hoped I'd stay on. Was the first a hint, and the second for show? I wouldn't mind so much if he simply said he wanted his own team.

Found calendar of events going to everyone in OPD as "FYI." Everyone, that is, except me.

Tuesday, March 2. Frayda attended OPD staff support meeting. Was full of euphemisms. She talked with one of the people on "the list" after the meeting, who thought everything would work out: if she only knew. Also, OPD is to have new form book, with memos to be "clean, crisp, freshly laundered." Urp. Form over substance.

Wednesday, March 3. Day not terribly eventful. Just twisting slowly, slowly in the wind.

Went by to see one former high-ranking OPD staffer who felt he had been screwed; wasted three weeks while he felt he might have a role. I noted my limited duties; he said, "They're sending you a signal." He said they gave the message in an unmistakable way to several people on Monday. Later talked with another staffer who felt misled by Harper. Said he felt like slugging him.

I decided to see Porter tomorrow and essentially say let's make it smooth on both sides. In particular, I'd like a commitment on keeping my office. What a thing to be worried about. But it has such symbolic importance.

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Over to West Wing to get Ed Gray's signature on last photo of OPD staff meeting. We talked about newspaper articles and critical comments from unnamed White House sources—"snipers in the dark."

Talked with OMB staffer. Asked me if I was overreacting. I could be wrong, but real sense that they want to get rid of me. These doubts about people's motivations are so frustrating. Am I wrong?

Thursday, March 4. Talked with Porter on various things, including Frayda. He said he would help if he could. Of course—anything to get rid of her.

I also noted need to return to Washington for appointment with Meese next week. It caught his interest, as I thought it would. I'll bet he thinks any contact between us is a threat. Or at very least bucks his treasured bureaucratic order.

Also, said as soon as I tied down my outside job—assuming no hang-ups—I would give them the date to smooth my departure for them. In turn, hoped they could smooth way for me, including my keeping my office, as probably won't be there much longer than the 60 days they mentioned. He said he saw no real problem.

Later talked with people over newest memo from on high, requesting that Harper's schedule not be given to the press. We had good laugh over the whole thing. Marty was never pretentious enough to send out his schedule, let alone request that staffers not hand it out. There is good reason not to give it to the press, of course. But why we need to know who Harper is having lunch with is beyond me.

Friday, March 5. At lunch talked about couple former OPD people who are hanging on to "serve the President." Yes, but also to keep perks, position, and salary.

As was leaving for home, ran into someone who has shifted to work for Harper. Said they had always liked him, and that he was so intelligent. I felt like puking. Where is people's pride?

Home. Beginning to look forward to next seven weeks in New York. Get away from all this.

Saturday, March 6. Went into office to talk with OMB official on possible job.

Checked mail and found copy of calendar of events being sent to Kevin, and going to everyone in OPD as "FYI." Everyone, that is, except me. It took them real effort not to check my name.

Monday, March 8. Into office, and showed memo cover sheet to Kevin, Frayda, and others. Everyone had a good laugh. Just so cold and unnecessary: I've got the message.

Packed up in office, and left for New York.

Called by Uhlmann [my new boss] at the U.S. Mission. Harper called him, and wants me to go to Military Manpower Task Force meeting on Wednesday. Interesting. I have expertise that Harper must rely upon, but he doesn't call me. He calls Uhlmann, and Uhlmann calls me. The new bureaucratic order.

Wednesday, March 10. Back to D.C. As rode from airport to White House in government car, realized how much I'd miss use of the cars. A nice way to travel.

In a rather irritable mood, which Frayda noticed. Shouldn't feel sorry for myself, as got here through politics, leaving through politics. But, I'm frustrated I'm not leaving when I wanted to, nor in the way I wanted. Why can't they just be upfront about that?

Met with Ed Meese. After some talk on Law of the Sea, I told him I felt wouldn't be a place for me in OPD after reorganization was complete. He said that he thought there would be. Harper was "high" on me. Meese said he hoped I would stay on—felt I was valuable member of Reagan team. I asked him if he had anything open on his staff. He said no, but if anything opened up, he'd keep me in mind. I said I'd think it over.

Totally unexpected. Knocked out my agenda for the meeting and had me more confused than ever. Am I paranoid? Yet come back to the list. And of course Harper would tell Ed that. Yet would he fib so blatantly?

Went to lunch with classmate from Stanford and spent virtually entire lunch discussing my status. Went over whole sequence of events and he believes my inferences on being forced out are correct.

Later talked with friend on staff about Meese meeting. He felt my intuition was right: Ed Meese simply "doesn't realize" what's going on—has to rely on others for information. Another staffer also thought that the reality was clear, whatever Ed [Meese] thought.

Thursday, March 18. Back to D.C. I spent afternoon talking with different people, about my earlier meeting with Meese. One said he had talked with Meese aide to clear the air. They had no idea he was unhappy. He agreed there was no future for me in policy division at White House, and that I'm not being paranoid. Harper has a problem: can't get rid of too many people too soon, or will have a stink. Almost had trouble as it was.

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Wednesday, March 24. Talked with Kevin's assistant in the morning. A red tag item there—I'm to prepare a memo for him to send to Weinberger.

I called Harper, and said that I would have problems doing it, as I am here [New York], and it is there. He said, with more than a little asperity, that I could figure out how to carry out my responsibilty. His tone rekindled my negative feeling towards him, and I pointed out that I had no materials or records here, and that I no longer had an assistant—because she had accelerated her job search after my talk with Porter. I mentioned she was detailed to State, and he wanted to know when she'd be off the payroll. His only interest in her is when she's gone—what a turkey. He said that if I needed to return to D.C., OK.

Returned to D.C.

Thursday, March 25. Talked with OPD staffer who said I should be aware that Porter has used what I'd said as an excuse. They said that Porter seemed single-minded in getting specific people off the payroll, irrespective of any problems they might be having. I commented that I should tell Porter that I'd decided to heed Meese's advice of two weeks ago, and stay. I'd love to see his reaction.

Thursday, April 1. *Inquiry* magazine job set.

Saturday, April 3. Typed up resignation memo to Harper and Porter. Short, with no mush, as I feel none for them. Made some copies, which I'm going to send to people like Ed Gray and Ed Meese. Will mail theirs before I mail originals to Harper and Porter, to let the people I regard as friends know first.

Meese said he hoped I would stay on—felt I was a valuable member of the Reagan team.

Monday, April 5. Had to return to Washington for LOS meeting.

Ran into person in other part of White House. He said that Baker side of the White House really seems to have it in for Gray and Frankum. A Baker aide supposedly has joked about how long Frankum will last without his perks. I said that is why I was leaving—I saw the handwriting on the wall. He said you couldn't miss it.

Thursday, April 15. Back to D.C. Fulsome letters on desk from Harper and Porter.

Friday, April 16. Met with Ed Meese. He'd heard I was leaving, said if I changed my mind, to let him know, and he'd see if could work something out. Then we discussed LOS, and met with a number of other people on it.

Later summoned by Porter. He said renovation of one of the offices is moving faster than had been expected, so they will have to move that occupant. He had thought wouldn't have to do till after I left. But things are really tight, so. . . . He said my stuff wouldn't have to go out of the building. Some favor. Of course there's room; the building is enormous. Guess I should be thankful for small favors. Feel numb—so totally screwed. He may have genuine problems, but I feel so humiliated.

Before I left, I put a memo in inter-office mail for Porter, to tell him an op-ed piece of mine on the draft is to run in *The New York Times* on Monday. I don't think he'll like it, but I got Marty's permission before he left. I figure Porter won't get the memo till Monday, which is too late for him to do anything about it. But if he complains, I can point out that the memo is dated the week before. Bureaucrat to bureaucrat, with love.

Tuesday, April 20. In D.C. on LOS matters, with four meetings and three memos.

I did get frustrated—neither Porter nor Harper commented on my draft article. I rather liked the idea of them being irritated.

Harper looking for a replacement for me. Started me wondering if I misjudged Harper on wanting to get rid of me. Probably not. But Why?

Back to New York. Looked at latest White House phone directory. Found out I am now a deputy assistant director of OPD for legal policy! Kind of a nice ring to it, even though it is really a demotion, since I go up less than others. One of the silly titles which Marty had abolished.

Sunday, April 25. I heard through the grapevine that Porter was really pissed off about goodbye letter I sent him. He apparently was angered that I didn't put in his full title in the heading at the top of the page, and didn't favorably mention him in it. How arrogant. I didn't say I'd enjoyed working with him because I'd neither worked with him nor particularly enjoyed our contact. Perhaps I should have addressed him as God.

Later, talked with other staffer. Wondered if we'd played into Porter's hands.

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Monday, April 26. Found out my stuff is sitting in vacant office in OPD. Office situation seems a bit less tight than Porter had said. Just rubbing salt in wounds.

Monday, May 3. Back in D.C. after end of conference. Was called at home by friend who had tried to contact me on Friday, but the White House signal office said my name was deleted. He hoped I was still on the payroll. So do I. Called signal office; they have my name as departing the staff. I told them yes, but not yet.

Into the office, but might as well not have. The office manager had yet to find an office for me; she said she had hoped I wouldn't be coming in. Gee thanks. I'm merely an inconvenience to them now.

Turns out the White House switchboard also has my name crossed off. I called them. Is getting rather humiliating; someone is overanxious.

For first time since we began working here, Kevin is getting more mail than me. Virtually no business crosses my desk anymore.

A friend tried me through the White House operator, and was told I was no longer there. How much more is this going to happen?

Tuesday, May 4. Kicked someone who is also leaving OPD out of his office. His bad luck is that he is lower on the status level than me. Feel like a vulture fighting over the last piece of rotten carrion.

Wednesday, May 5. On way in, heard on news that administration to impose sugar import quotas. Another sell-out. At least soon I won't feel responsible for this kind of garbage. So terrible and unnecessary.

When parked, I noticed that one of people who was promoted now has former Deputy Director Frankum's spot. The new order.

Frustrating. Can't even use my office equipment, which someone else has taken. Would help everyone if I disappeared. Almost too much—the office manager later told me I might get moved again. I'm just a relic in the way.

Thursday, May 6. Spent time clearing out and did exit interview with archives people.

A friend tried me through the White House operator and was told I was no longer there. How many more times is this going to happen? Called them again.

Tuesday, May 11. Attended my first and last Harper OPD staff meeting. Harper noted my departure and said nice things about me. But what really stuck out to me was his comment that he had relied on me in the transition. One of those polite fibs. He'd been obnoxious then, so I'd tried to avoid him.

Later talked with friend in other part of White House. We discussed personalities. He noted that some people, such as some of the Baker crowd were the type of people who would do very well in the Kremlin: They would just tap into the power lines. Harsh, though probably true.

Thursday, May 13. A friend of mine who'd left OPD left a note on my desk: "Doug: We're counting the days!!—Ed and Roger." Funny.

Started saying goodbyes. Talked with one frustrated staffer, who noted with some asperity that loyalty to Reagan didn't seem to mean much anymore. He also had no knowledge of why Harper and Porter wanted to get rid of me.

The bureaucracy still marches on. I'm still getting notices for meetings of working groups at Interior and Defense. Wonder how long it will take the system to realize that I'm gone.

Friday, May 14. Really feel nothing at all.

First call in was from assistant secretary of state whom I'd dealt with on LOS. Facing very difficult confirmation hearings and desperate for help. Shows how weak his position is—having to rely on someone who is serving his last day!

Some friends held informal going-away party for me. They didn't invite Harper or Porter, but one of the other guests felt it was bad political form not to, so he invited Harper. What do I care?

Still have to check out, so haven't felt the full impact yet.

Tuesday, May 18. Back to White House for last official duty—getting the necessary 16 signatures on my "check-out form" certifying that I've completed all the security and other bureaucratic requirements. The final act was getting holes punched in my ID. On way in I already felt like an outsider.

Wednesday, May 26. Took Reagan bumper stickers off my car. End of three-year association with Reagan. ■

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Language Barriers

by James Fallows

One of the few books that have ever really changed my mind is *American Tongue and Cheek*, a small volume by Jim Quinn.* Its subject is "proper" English usage, and it hit me in my prejudices and insecurities.

I had long been a member of the make-a-fuss-over-usage school of linguistics. I tried to be discreet about my beliefs. I did not write articles about barbarous formulations or scold people in public for saying "hopefully" or "the media is. . . ." But I did systematically correct misused "that"s and "which"s in manuscripts and explain to the eager young the evils of stringing noun phrases together as if they were adjectives. I mourned the desecration of the old prayer book ("We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy table . . .") in the Episcopal church.

Part of this attitude was natural to my line of work—a writer is supposed to know about grammar—but that was not my only motivation. My original interest in words was driven by a need for social prophylaxis, or self-protection. As a schoolboy in a small western town where I was far from the toughest character on the playground, I eventually seized upon knowing more and longer words as a useful way of distinguishing myself from the mob. After curling up in the evening with *30 Days to a More Powerful Vocabulary*, I could impress my friends, or at least get their attention, by saying, "We've got a paucity of school spirit!" the next day. Hadn't the same approach worked—and on grownups—for William F. Buckley? In my summer jobs as mail-handler, I was sometimes chewed out by the foreman because I would pause while unloading a mail sack to take the "It Pays to Increase Your Word Power" test in the *Reader's Digest*.

These efforts took on a different edge as I prepared to go east to college. In the summer before I enrolled at Harvard, I pored over Fowler's *English Usage* and the "Watch Your Language" works of Theodore Bernstein. If Edwin Newman had been in the proper-language business back then, I would have read his books as well. What had been in junior high school a desire to show off had become a struggle to avoid humiliation. I feared that, amid the children of Andover and the nation's assorted Country Day schools, I would reveal myself as a bumpkin by saying the wrong thing. Without knowing where I had gone wrong, I would telegraph my lack of background and sophistication. My brother, who made the same social journey, put his finger on the problem: it was fear of revealing oneself (normally I'd say "revealing yourself") as Gomer Pyle.

Those fears subsided but never fully went away. I shuddered when a copy editor at a publishing house pointed out that, for the first 30 years of my life, I had been using the know-nothing "different than," instead of the well-bred "different from." I spoke in slow, careful fashion when meeting a powerful journalistic figure renowned for being able to "sniff out the middle class in anyone." I chided my friends in university linguistics departments for their permissive attitude toward usage. According to them, whatever people *said* was proper usage; only snobs and pedants would dare take a "prescriptive" attitude toward language. I wrote this off as yet another symptom of the slackness of contemporary social science.

Then I read Jim Quinn's quirky book. Quinn is identified as a poet and a food columnist for *Philadelphia* magazine and the *Soho News*. His prey is the big-game of the proper-usage business.

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*Penguin, $4.95.

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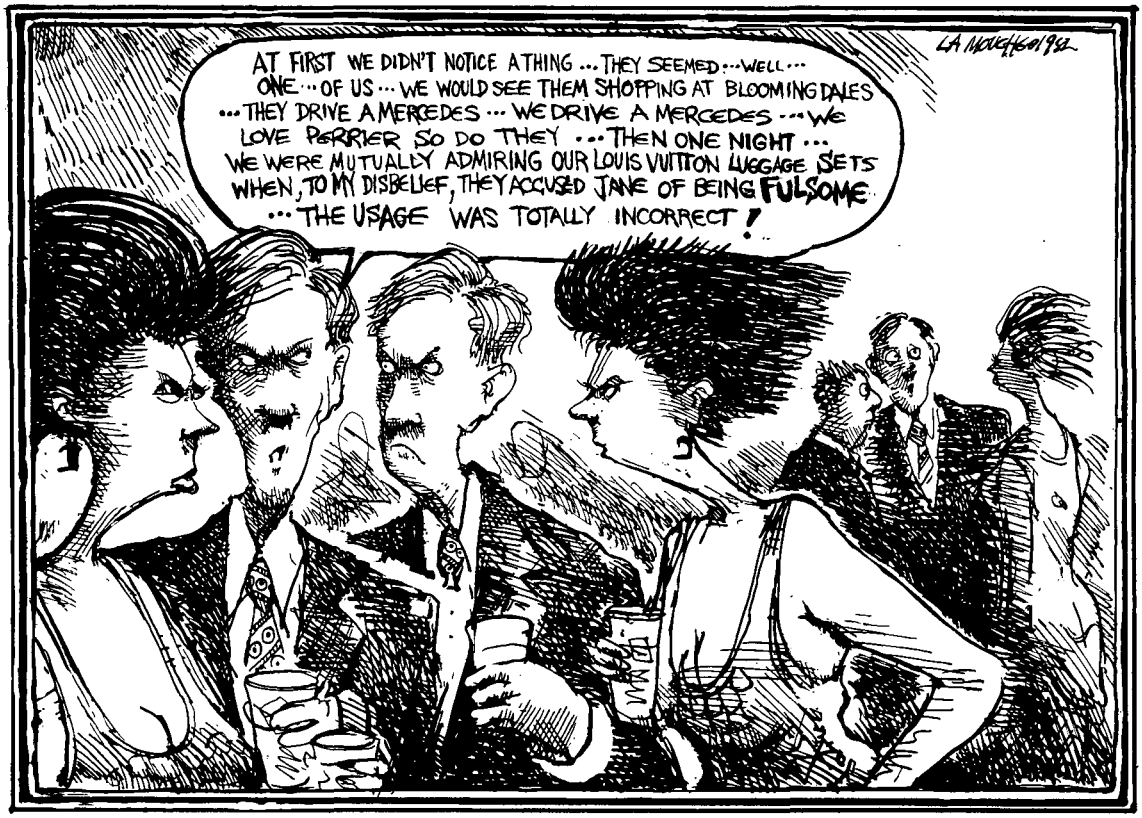

He says at the beginning, "This is a book against Edwin Newman, Theodore Bernstein, the *Harper's Dictionary of Contemporary Usage, The American Heritage Dictionary,* John Simon, Wilson Follett, Jacques Barzun, H. W. Fowler, and all the petty nuisances who write letters to the paper whenever they see the word 'finalize' or 'hopefully' or 'less' instead of 'few.' They are all linguistic barbarians. . . .

"This is a book against all those prescriptive style manuals. But it is a conservative book. It defends the traditional use of English. It defends our language against ignorant corrections, self-proclaimed experts, and pointless logic chopping."

What the people on Quinn's list have in common is a heroic struggle to defend the language against "ugliness," "barbarisms," "imprecision," and, in a more general way, change. What Quinn shows is that, in most of their crusades, the experts are flat, plain wrong. But his argument also suggests a certain wrong-headedness on the part of the experts, rather than mere errors of fact, which affects questions of greater magnitude than simple syntax.

Most of the language experts' indictments begin with the assertion that, in ignorant hands, the "original" and "precise" meaning of a word has been lost or blurred. Thus, typically they will point out that "decimate" really means "reduce by one-tenth," not "destroy much of," and that the richness of the language is diminished when fools use it loosely, in the second sense. Or they will say that "unique" means "the only one," not "one of a few," and therefore it is barbarous to describe something as "one of the most unique." They will say that *hoi polloi* needed no article before it in the original Greek, and therefore it is a sign of ignorance to say in English "the hoi polloi." They will resort to sentence diagrams to prove that "everybody" is singular and "their" is plural, so no one of culture could possibly say, "Everybody makes their own choices." Most often they render these verdicts in a tone of beleaguered, huffy impatience that would be tolerated in few other kinds of writing.

Quinn first shows that many of the arguments about "original" meaning rest on the flimsiest and most arbitrary notions of what certain words "really" mean. Consider one of his scores of examples, the word "fulsome." Even in my "Increase Your Word Power" days I knew this was a howler. Someone like Elizabeth Taylor would take the podium and offer her "fulsome thanks" to all the little people who made it possible, and those in the know would chuckle meanly into their

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hands. Obviously the beautiful bimbo did not realize that she was really offering "gross, offensive" thanks. But unlike many of those experts, Quinn took a look at the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which provides a history of the connotations of each word. There he found that the "original" meaning of the word was just what people like Elizabeth Taylor had in mind. He quotes the otherwise admirable Red Smith on the bothersome misuse of "fulsome": "Let's cling to old established meanings. This 'new' [i.e., Taylor-esque] meaning is the fruit of ignorance." But, Quinn says,

"Oddly enough, it is the older meaning, 'disgusting or offensive to good taste,' that is the fruit of ignorance. 'Fulsome' is formed from the words 'full' and 'some,' and originally had no bad connotations at all. But probably because the first syllable was ignorantly associated with the word 'foul'—because both 'foul' and the first syllable of 'fulsome' were once pronounced alike—'fulsome' began to pick up other meanings.

"The meaning of 'simple abundance' lasted from the first appearance of the word (c. 1250) till Elizabethan times (last *OED* citation is 1583). In the meantime, the word picked up and lost other meanings: 'fat, overgrown' (1340-1678) . . . 'gross and satiating' (1410-1770) . . . and finally 'gross or excessive, offensive to good taste like flattery' (1663 to the present).

"What a spectacular career! What a wonderful word! It should please all our many purists that after 700 years of wayward use, and compulsive fiddling, 'fulsome' is finally returning to its original and etymologically correct meaning, that is, if our purists knew anything about language history or etymology. Instead, they find the correct usage a 'favorite criteri[on] of illiteracy,' 'the fruit of ignorance.' "

Quinn also argues that flexibility and change have been the glory, not the shame, of the language, and that inveighing against them is as pointless as giving speeches about a river's changing course. (" 'To decimate' did originally mean 'to reduce by a tenth'; 'noon' originally meant 'three o'clock in the afternoon.' But it is perfectly obvious that if we keep 'decimate' to its original and mathematically correct meaning, we'll all but exclude it from our vocabularies.") He shows that the big names of English lit have used the very constructions that Newman and Simon see as telltales of illiteracy. ("Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes"—O. Wilde; "These kind of knaves I know"—W. Shakespeare; "We drove very slow for the last two stages of the road"—W. Thackeray; "Who are you speaking of?"—T. Hardy; "Consider first, that Great and Bright infers not excellence"—J. Milton; "Typhus fever decimated the school periodically"—C. Bronte; etc.) And he shows that, as long as linguistic records have been kept, despairing pedants have fumed, to no ultimate effect, about the supposed loss of "beauty" and "precision" in the mother tongue. For example, Jonathan Swift—who is one of the few distinguished writers Quinn can find on the purists' side—waged a lonely twilight struggle against that hideous neologism, "mob," exactly the kind of direct, muscular, Anglo-Saxon-sounding word (though of Latin origin) that most language experts would now endorse.

Quinn's evidence against the word police is far richer and more amusing than I am able to suggest here. But it seemed to me that if even part of his argument were true (and the items I checked in the dictionary bore him out), it would suggest an intriguing question. If the language experts were simultaneously so self-righteous and so wrong, how could they stay in business? Why invest such a disproportionate amount of energy and emotion in a cause with such feeble scholarly foundations and so little practical effect? What was going on here?

Jim Quinn alludes to one explanation, which is that word-prissiness is one of today's few socially acceptable forms of snobbery. It is no longer in good taste to comment on a man's "breeding," but it is fine to pick apart his words. He says:

"We do not usually think of liberals as defenders of inherited wealth and the life values that can be acquired only by people who never had to work their way up in the world, but here is a sample liberal [Ben Lucien Burman] describing his liberal attitudes for the *Harper's Dictionary of Contemporary Usage:*

" 'I'm anything but a snob in my social relationships. But I'm a terrible snob regarding language. I can't abide words that through debased usage by adolescents, commentators, or careless authors appear overnight in our literature and, like nouveau riche Southern rednecks who have found oil on their property, try to make ugliness and ignorance fashionable.' "

Quinn's only mistake, it seems to me, is to limit this phenomenom by identifying it as a "liberal" pattern. What we have here goes beyond politics.

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With the proliferation of the word experts and the popularity of their works, we are seeing the latest crest in the timeless pattern of conspicuous consumption.

Wordly Possessions

In another useful book published two years ago, *Showing Off in America*, John Brooks attempted to update Thorstein Veblen's anatomy of ostentatious display. The purpose of such display, in Veblen's view, was almost always "invidious" or "predatory," by which he meant that the displayer was inviting others to enter a comparison in which they would come up short. Brooks's argument was that the means for such a comparison had changed, even though the motivations had not. In general, he said that the change was from the naked displays of wealth represented by the mansions along Fifth Avenue and in Newport in Veblen's day to a display of imputed wealth, represented most frequently and conveniently by *education*.

This is a familiar pattern within generations of one family. Among my neighbors when I was a child was a family widely assumed to be part of the leadership of the Southern California Mafia. The father indicated his status by the jewels that covered his fingers and the Doberman pinschers that surrounded his house. But when he offered his children for admiration, their adornment was their advanced graduate degrees. Whole societies may adjust their values in the same direction, from displays equivalent to the pinkie ring (i.e., the Cadillacs with the tail fins of the late 1950s) to those equivalent to the graduate degree (i.e., a BMW, a place in Aspen, children in the right schools).

Perhaps the most significant fact about such displays is how much they can vary, in their form of expression and their intensity, between one society and another and from one era to the next. With the possible exception of Thorstein Veblen, who said that at a certain pastoral stage in human history people had been free of such "invidious" urges, most people would concede that the striving, comparative impulse is a normal ingredient in the human makeup. But no American who has lived in England can fail to notice how much more class-bound that society is than our own; something in its social organization greatly increases the importance of symbols of status, thereby severely sapping the energy that people have for pursuits other than those of assessing their relative standing on the social pyramid. But no one who has traveled widely in this country can fail to see the variations between, say, Boston and Tucson in the importance and firmness of class differences. It seems to me that several aspects of our recent social history have increased the pressure toward the kind of invidious display represented by the word snobs.

One has been the dramatic democratization of higher education since World War II. One of my grandfathers was a College Man; the other was not. In the 1920s, when they were beginning their careers, that one difference described the social gulf between them, although it said nothing about their integrity, intelligence, or ultimate success. In their generation, fewer than ten percent of college-age people attended college. For the few who had one, a college degree automatically indicated a certain level of wealth and social standing. The same is still true in England, where only five percent of the college-age population attends college, with a further crucial distinction separating the products of Oxford and Cambridge from those who attend the newer, "Redbrick" schools. But since the 1960s, roughly half of all college-age people in this country have gone to college.

It would be difficult to argue that the well-educated children of postwar affluence are proportionately more intelligent than their grandparents were. But among the things they *have* learned, after sitting through the survey courses on Ptolemy and Plato and rubbing shoulders with those whose families winter in Gstaad, is what the signals are of an "educated"—which in this sense means "well-bred"—man or woman. These include using the right kind of language; displaying a mastery of artistic, geographic, and culinary allusions; and, in general, providing indications that, even before you went to college, you came from the right kind of stock.

The other source of pressure has been the phenomenal geographic mobility of postwar America, which has reduced the status markers that stick so tenaciously to citizens of small towns. In a stable, small-town environment, your position depends not merely on the impression you make at the moment, but on the long trail of impressions left by your family and by yourself over the years. Who are your people? Do you go to church? How do you treat your children? Do you take part in the PTA? In certain large cities, such as (in my experience) Houston and Los Angeles, social standing depends more simply on the

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amount of money you are thought to be worth.

I do not mean to suggest that either the static social grid of the small town or the big cities' aristocracies of money should be thought an ideal society. Many who have felt observed by all eyes in a small town have craved the anonymity of the city, where they may approach strangers with a clean slate. Yet the other side of this freedom and anonymity is the need to send out signals of status quickly. In Washington, this mainly involves indicating where you work, which is why the inevitable first question in that city is, "What do you do?" Russell Baker has indicated the far greater richness and complexity of New York society by saying that dinner conversation there begins with three questions, not just one: What do you do? Where did you go to college? Where are your children in school?

Strictly Speaking, Shallow Thinking

Perhaps because of these two changes, there seems to be significantly more effort devoted to "invidious" display than a generation ago. Wine snobbery was once the province of the few, and word snobbery was confined (at least in towns like the one where I grew up) to the retired English teacher who clipped columns from *Saturday Review*. Now everyone has his own special little California vineyard to tell you about, complete with information about the good and bad years. Even *Advertising Age* devotes column after column to proper-usage tips.

This might be all to the good if the apparent motive behind it were that of instruction; more knowledge is always valuable, whether about "fulsome" or Pouilly-Fuisse. But the great majority of the wine or word experts seem intent not on teaching but on ridiculing the unlettered and in preying on the insecurities of those who desperately hope to prove themselves well-lettered. This difference is obvious if you lay Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* alongside a sample column by John Simon. The purpose of the first is to convey an idea about composition; of the second, to terrorize anyone who thinks his prose might ever be subjected to examination under Simon's loupe. The message of one is "You can learn to write better"; the message of the other is "I am more intelligent than you." Or, with a slightly different twist, "I am classier than you." William Safire differs from many of the other word experts in sounding a more jovial and tolerant tone. But he is also a canny character who must have realized that, by deciding to work this beat, he would improve his standing with the high-toned set. Compare his standing in intellectual circles with that of Patrick J. Buchanan—"Safire's politics are atrocious, of course, but I wouldn't miss his columns on the language." Or compare William Buckley's standing with Jesse Helms's.

The element of insecurity is crucial to these transactions, and is what gives them their most noxious effects. A book that in other ways was remarkable in its prescience about America's social development—Vance Packard's *The Status Seekers*, published in 1959—played skillfully on these fears. The book's subtitle was "An Exploration of Class Behavior in America and the Hidden Barriers That Affect You, Your Community, Your Future." Implicit in the idea of "hidden barriers" was the need for constant vigilance against the unconscious gesture through which you'd betray your "real" nature. That threat was made explicit in chapter titles such as "Behavior That Gives Us Away" and passages like the following:

"A now famous Hollywood actor still reveals his lower white-collar origins every time he sits down. He pulls up his trousers to preserve the crease."

That such a book should enjoy such success indicates not simply that Packard had an important story to tell, as in fact he did, but also that the hunger he was feeding was as widespread as those addressed by diet books and Gothic novels. Packard also argued that the real victims of this anxiety were neither the truly privileged nor the down-and-out, but the "people in-between, members of the semi-upper and limited-success classes." He then provided a perfect illustration of the attitude that created such anxieties, Lord Melbourne's comment that "the higher and lower classes, there's some good in them, but the middle classes are all affectation and conceit and pretense and concealment."

It is sometimes hard to judge which party suffers most from these transactions, the one who is nervous lest he make a misstep or the one thinking, "Trash!" The damage to the anxious victim is certainly the more obvious: American literature and daily life are full of illustrations of the character who is immobilized by fear that he will send the wrong signal. Yet there may be as great a toll exacted from those who spend their time policing "right" and "wrong" behavior. In its most agonizing form, this is the familiar cocktail-party display

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put on by a couple, one of whom lives in dread that the other will embarrass them both through a gaffe that reveals bad taste. Did he *really* ask who Annie Hall was? Did she really bring up an insight from the *Reader's Digest?* (We are talking, of course, about the period before Susan Sontag's famous comparison between the *Reader's Digest* and *The Nation* at New York's Town Hall.)

The real significance of these attitudes is that their realm is far broader than questions of words and wine. It is hard to offer honest praise, or criticism, of anything from a movie to an auto when the real subject of the conversation is not the thing itself but the taste it reveals. In that uneasy moment when the judgment's not yet in—should *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* be considered "tacky" or "fun"—it is perilous to state your views too clearly. The antennae must go out. Two years before the movie *Urban Cowboy* was released, it would have been hard to convince urban professionals that they should spend even a minute of their time contemplating the culture of blue-collar Houston, let alone think of mechanical bulls or the Cotton-Eyed Joe as emblems of enviable style. Two years after the film was released that task was impossible again.

There is a "gotcha!" part in most of our souls that revels in besting others, whether on a ballfield or with a dictionary. "Gotcha!" might, in fact, be the subtitle of Jim Quinn's book. But Quinn makes his judgments after offering arguments, not just displaying attitudes, and that is what distinguishes him from the authorities he attacks. It also places him on the losing side of today's trends. The rules of the game encourage those who can sniff the changing winds, who argue against people rather than ideas. More than anything else, this is a tremendous waste of talent. What might a man of John Simon's acuity accomplish were he not dissipating his talents enforcing a tyranny of anxiety?

Even politics has felt the effect of "invidious display." Nervous as people may be about avoiding the wrong locution, they seem equally anxious about displaying the "wrong" political stance. Will the nuclear freeze prove to be a sound, reponsible idea—or will those who endorse it soon look like softheaded simpletons? Is it right to like Jonathan Schell's writings about nuclear war when they are in *The New Yorker* but embarrassing to do so after the book has been published and attacked? These are perilous waters we are entering; it is every man for himself.

The idea of politics as a contest of manners and attitudes has by now become almost a joke—the joke is that when you've seen what kind of car somebody drives you know what opinions he's likely to hold. Joke or not, it comes close to the truth: how many Volvo station wagons have you seen with bumper stickers reading "Nuclear plants are built better than Jane Fonda"? How many Winnebagos exhorting onlookers to "Save the whales"? And what deprives the joke of its humor is that its effects have become so profound.

When outsiders view a foreign society, it often is obvious to them that certain habits of thought make a tremendous difference in how successfully that society meets its challenges. Strangers to India or a dozen other poor countries, for example, can see within hours that those societies are hobbled by the desire of the brightest students to be clerks and bureaucrats after they receive their degrees, rather than to dirty themselves in commerce. Yet to those within the society, such habits can be ingrained so deeply that they are barely noticed—or if noticed, are thought to be beyond all possibility of change.

So it may be with our ingrained habit of turning political ideas into one more badge of the "right" taste. Fashion in politics will give us sentiments like "I hate to say it, but Reagan's really right about the budget" in 1981, and "I don't know what the Republicans could have been thinking of when they came up with this economic disaster" one year later. It starts by ridiculing General Alexander Haig for his prose and ends by celebrating him, in moderation, for his supposed moderation. In the case of the budget, it does not encourage new thoughts about, say, making the Federal Reserve subject to political control—unless that becomes certified as a fashionable "new idea," like the flat-rate tax. In the case of the general, it does not encourage an examination of his career as a military bureaucrat, which was a more important key to his performance than his idiosyncratic prose.

The prescriptions of the word experts, if faithfully applied, can shield an utterance from ridicule, but can do nothing to ensure that it contains a thought of worth. It may well be so, as the experts tirelessly preach, that our use of language reflects the underlying nature of our thought. If so, they have pointed us to a style of thought like their perfect sentence: careful, safe, and ever glancing backward over its shoulder to see if anyone's laughing. ■

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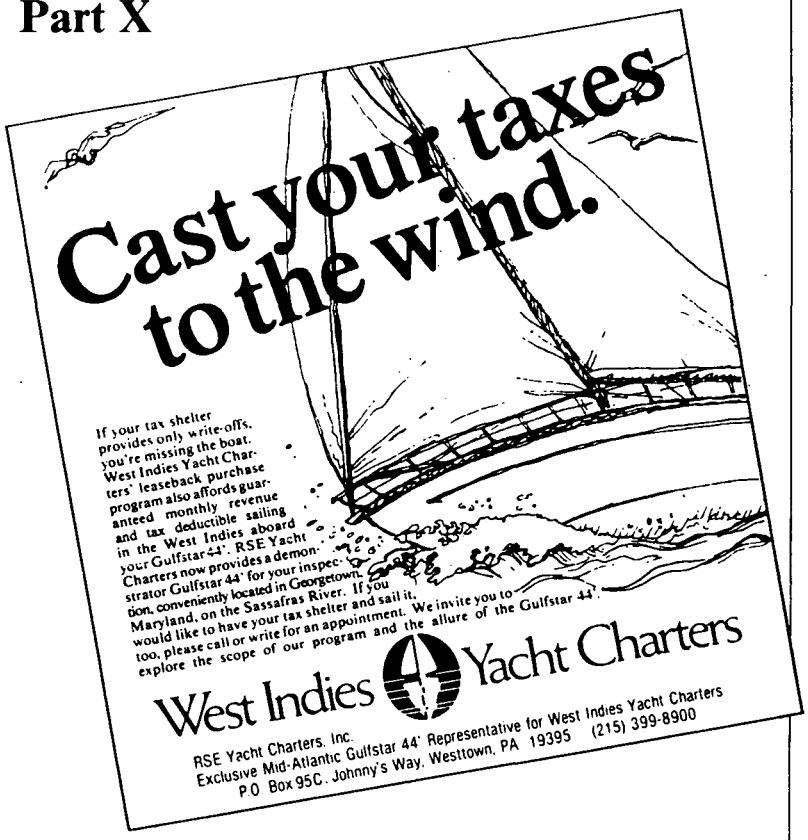
TIDBITS AND OUTRAGES

Reaganomics Meets Rodeo Drive Part X



Consistency is the Hobgoblin of Little Minds

The office of Senator Charles E. Grassley, a Republican from Iowa, recently sent out a press release containing the following:

"Grassley praised Senate colleagues 'for making tough decisions to close tax loopholes which have led to abuses,' and said he was particularly pleased at the Senate's willingness to protect farmers through a special concession."

And in January We Expect a Lot of Overtime

The New York Times reported July 22 that air conditioning breakdowns on New York City buses are widespread, but that under the transit union contract, air-conditioning mechanics are allowed to take vacations when they are most needed in the shops—during July and August.

The Postman Always Glows Twice

A subcommitte of the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service held a hearing in August on Postal Service preparedness for mail delivery in the event of a nuclear attack.

Who's On First ?

The following exchange took place on the floor of the House of Representatives on July 29 between Republican Rep. William L. Dickinson and Democratic Rep. Dan Rostenkowski, who was in the chair at the time:

Mr. DICKINSON. Mr. Chairman, a parliamentary inquiry.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman will state it.

Mr. DICKINSON. The Chairman stated that the Committee would be in business so to speak, for title VIII or title X. It is my recollection that we had just started with title IV and got unanimous consent to reopen title VIII, and title X at that point had not been reached.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair will make the observation that title IX was renumbered by the Schroeder amendment and became title X.

Mr. DICKINSON. So there is no title IX?

The CHAIRMAN. Title IX of the reported bill is now title X.

Mr. DICKINSON. So there is no title IX. There is a title X, and we have reopened title VIII, if I am correct.

The CHAIRMAN. A new title IX was inserted by amendment, so there is now a title IX and a title X.

Mr. DICKINSON. There is a title VIII, there is a title IX, there is a title X, is that correct?

The CHAIRMAN. Title X is the last title in the bill.

Mr. DICKINSON. So an amendment to either title VIII or title IX or title X would be in order at this time?

The CHAIRMAN. Not title IX; just title VIII and title X are open to amendment.

Mr. DICKINSON. Well, I had an amendment that I would like to offer. I thought it was to title IX if there is a title IX.

The CHAIRMAN. If the gentleman's amendment was drafted to title IX it will be in order to title X.

Mr. DICKINSON. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk which I would like to offer to title VIII.

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All Purpose News Story, Volume II

Budget Impasse Snarls Congress, White House

By Gregg Easterbrook
Special to TWM

WASHINGTON—Once again, Congress and the White House failed yesterday to reach agreement on administration plans for dramatic cuts in the federal (1) program.

After the collapse of an all-night bargaining session on Capitol Hill, one prominent congressman vowed to resist the cuts "as long as there is life in these old bones and (2) ." Without compromise, there can be no hope of passing the new federal budget. Technically, the country has operated without a budget since (3) .

The cuts, when sent up to Congress, seemed likely to pass easily. Nearly every congressman was on record as opposed to government spending, and had campaigned with ringing promises of (4) . Moreover, a General Accounting Office study had just revealed that the (5) , which administers the program, was so top-heavy and inefficient it took six months to (6) .

But then an intensive lobbying campaign began. Special-interest lobbyists warned congressmen the cuts would impose great suffering on (7) , especially (7) in their districts. Many congressmen felt deeply moved by reminders of their sacred moral obligation to (8) .

The President seemed unconcerned with any hardships his cuts might create, and defended them in a nationally televised address. "Let me tell you a little story," he said. "Once, (9) . And that's why we must reduce the size of the federal government."

Then newspapers discovered that a related effect of the cuts would be minor reductions in subsidies to (10) and other programs benefiting mainly the well-off. Middle-class homeowners were distressed to learn the cuts would also affect them, through reductions in federal assistance for (11) . CBS News dramatized their plight in a much-watched documentary called (12) .

Quickly the President softened his stand. "It was never my intention to balance the budget on the backs of (13) ," he explained.

Soon many congressmen leapt in with their own budget proposals, hoping to (14) . Complicating matters is the multilayered budget process, where _____ committees and _____, _____ subcommittees must vote on every proposal, revision, and rider at every stage. As the OMB director admitted in testimony before the House (15) , "Nobody really knows what's going on with all these amendments."

When negotiations broke down last night, House and Senate conferees had been unable even to agree on (16) . To avert a shutdown of the federal government, they are expected tomorrow to pass a 30-day emergency budget measure, clearing the way to (17) next month.

All Purpose Budget Story Answers

(1) fast food stamps
AFDC (Aid to Families with Designer Clothes)
Synthetic Tools Corp.

(2) cash in this old campaign fund
cameras in this old hearing room
a flask in this old hip pocket

(3) Kellogg-Briand Pact
Gadsden Purchase
Continental Congress

(4) vast but unspecified savings
sharp cutbacks in programs for other states
more ringing promises

(5) Department of Sober Reassessments
Catalog Store Regulatory Commission
Historic Airport Preservation Trust

(6) observe a holiday
report a fire
switch to Daylight Savings Time

(7) superfluous civil servants
crooked corporations
featherbedded unions

(8) get reelected
avoid taking the blame
retire to lobbying jobs

(9) an able-bodied black teenager received an offer to become director of marketing for a major multinational corporation. But this lad had to turn the job down because federal regulations required him to finish high school. Today, he is a carrier of typhoid fever.

a welfare mother in Chicago bought vodka and T-bone steaks with money she acquired by fraudulently obtaining more than 2,000 defense consulting contracts. She was caught only when one of her reports turned out to be useful. I would give you her name, but that would violate national security regulations.

a farmer in Nebraska was paid federal subsidies not to accept other federal subsidies for not growing crops on his land. Thus he was forced by the government, against his will, to stay in business. In anger and frustration, he has become Japanese.

(10) fur storage facilities
executive heliports
mobile telephone services

(11) second-home loans
garage vouchers
the faculty club rehab program

(12) "How Our Half Lives"
"Jeffrey: Portrait of a Stockbroker"
"And Who Will Water Their Lawns?"

(13) people whose names have Roman numerals
people whose houses have Roman columns
tennis instructors

(14) grab headlines
protect the weak
protect the strong

(15) Subcommittee on Bridge Abutments and Pancreas Research
Special Permanent Select Subcommittee on County Fairs
Subcommittee on Asides and Musings of the Quotable Non Sequitur Committee

(16) how many pecks in a bushel
what is the capital of Maine
which door to leave by

(17) start all over again
deadlock on a completely different issue
finally pass the 1963 budget

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SAM NUNN:

Photo: Diana Walker

Can He Escape The Respectability Trap?

by Jonathan Alter

From time to time the political landscape shifts in such a way that an aperture flicks open, revealing with some certainty which issues will dominate the decades ahead, and which people will dominate those issues.

One of the issues, of course, is national defense, a subject that relates not only to national security, but to the shape the American economy will take. Who will dominate defense? In Congress, at least, the future can be easily associated with a name: for the next 25 years or more, military debate likely will revolve around a sharp-minded Democratic senator from Georgia named Sam Nunn.

Nunn came to the Senate in 1972 at age 34 to fill the seat of the late Richard Russell, who from his position as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee helped run the U.S. military for a generation. One of the men Russell shared authority with was Carl Vinson, long-time chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. Vinson, also a Georgian, was Sam Nunn's great-uncle.

So Nunn naturally gravitated toward the Armed Services Committee. He is 24 years younger than the next in seniority on the committee, but within a few years, if the Senate turns Democratic again, he will probably become chairman. John Stennis, committee chairman for 12 years until the Republican takeover of the Senate, is 81 years old; Henry Jackson has other chairmanship choices and is in danger of losing his seat; Howard Cannon is the underdog this fall; Harry Byrd is retiring. When Nunn does make it, and the odds heavily favor it, his youth and impregnable Senate seat mean he is likely to run the committee well into the 21st century.

One reason this matters so much is that Nunn is genuinely interested in breaking through the stale defense debates of recent years and rethinking the issue. Do we really need 15 aircraft-carrier task forces? Do we really need to project American power into every nook and cranny of the globe? What are this country's military aims? Which can we pay for? Those seem like basic enough questions, but they have never been asked much except by those, like the military services, with unshakable interests in the answers. Being from Georgia, which receives about $5 billion all told from the Pentagon each year, Nunn shares many of those interests. Nonetheless, he wants to start the process. "This administration needs a strategy, a sense of priority," Nunn says, adding that earlier administrations didn't have these things either.

When a senator of Nunn's stature and future position sounds willing even to consider questioning the emperor's clothes, it's cause for some relief on the part of those who despair of ever changing the dreary context of the defense debate. Aides to other senators, who like nothing better than to sit around assessing the competition, are impressed by that quality in Nunn, and by Nunn's likability and capacity for hard work. So are reporters and "military reformers," two other groups that are hard to please. He is widely considered to be among the one or two senators best informed on

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defense issues.

Within defense, Nunn has developed subspecialties, among them manpower and personnel matters, which account for 60 percent of the Pentagon budget. In 1974 Stennis appointed Nunn chairman of a new subcommittee on that subject, and for six years he used the assignment to project his own view of the way the military should change. Nunn came to believe, for instance, that the military included too many generals and admirals—more, in fact, than during all of World War II. Over the repeated—even desperate—objections of senior military officers, Nunn finally prevailed in 1978 in enacting a modest six-percent reduction. Today, after several more of what Nunn's defense aide, Arnold Punaro, calls "Iwo-Jima-like battles," there are 100 fewer such officers.

This willingness on Nunn's part to go head-on against the Pentagon has been growing in recent years. In 1981 he enraged Pentagon brass by making public a study put together by a Department of Defense civilian named Chuck Spinney that took issue with the premise behind the military's reliance on expensive and highly complex weaponry. Nunn says he doesn't agree with everything in the controversial Spinney report, but he felt it necessary to air critical views publicly—the aim, even if the Pentagon didn't appreciate it, being a better defense in the long run.

Similarly, last November Nunn successfully pushed an amendment through the Senate requiring that Congress be alerted every time there is a cost overrun of 15 percent or more on a major weapon system. The Department of Defense was adamantly opposed; so was the Pentagon's most powerful supporter on Capitol Hill, Republican Senator John Tower, now chairman of the Armed Services Committee. Tower eventually voted for the unanimously passed measure—"you can't vote against motherhood," he said at the time—but Senate staff members say it was only because Nunn maneuvered the chairman into a position where he couldn't publicly press the Pentagon's case. Like the Spinney case, the cost-overrun amendment suggests that when he puts his mind to it, Sam Nunn can be a highly effective and imaginative friend of a sensible defense policy.

This skepticism about the Pentagon is unusual for someone of Nunn's background, and not only because he comes from a part of the country known for its reverence for the military. In terms of his career, Nunn was also an unlikely critic. Before reaching the Senate, he had but one year's experience as a staff aide to Carl Vinson (who has an aircraft carrier named after him because he never said no to the U.S. Navy in his entire career), a few years as a small-town attorney, some unremarkable service in the Georgia state legislature, and precious little else in the way of preparation. "Sam had no pre-Senate experience that would have habituated him to the skepticism that one should have for big, bureaucratic institutions, says Jeffrey Record, who served for four years as Nunn's aide on defense issues. "He came to Washington believing that what was put out in Pentagon press releases was really true, that 'duty, honor, country' were really lived by. . . [and] that military men were by nature superior to other bureaucrats."

Record attributes the change in Nunn to several major influences. First, in the mid-1970s, Nunn met Lieutenant General James F. Hollingsworth, a salty soldier from the old school. According to Record, Hollingsworth, then commander of U.S. forces in South Korea, didn't have much respect for the "cookie-pushing" officers he believed were ruining the military. As he and Nunn grew closer (in 1977, they traveled together to Europe to assess NATO), the senator came around to the Hollingsworth view, slowly beginning to resent the ethic in the military services that so often seems to place pay, benefits, and other creature comforts ahead of establishing an effective, well-disciplined fighting machine.

Record believes a second, more important influence on Nunn's thinking was his experience with the All-Volunteer Force, which the senator repeatedly criticized in his subcommittee as poorly manned (too many high school drop-outs who flunk skills tests) and overly reliant on hard economic times to meet recruiting goals. "When the Army says the AVF is wonderful and you know it isn't, then you begin to suspect that, hell, if they lie about this, then maybe they'll lie about other things too," Record says.

Then came the West Point cheating scandals, where the Army went before Nunn's subcommittee and tried to minimize the inadequacies of cadet training. And finally Desert One, the disastrous Iranian hostage rescue mission. Aides say Nunn was deeply shaken by how so ill-conceived a plan could have met with such approval by so many high-ranking officials.

Take It from Ernie

So through hard work and an open mind, Sam Nunn has avoided turning into another John Tower, and the American people can be thankful for that. But Nunn's advances should not obscure the fact that he remains in many ways the product of his background—a background that makes it

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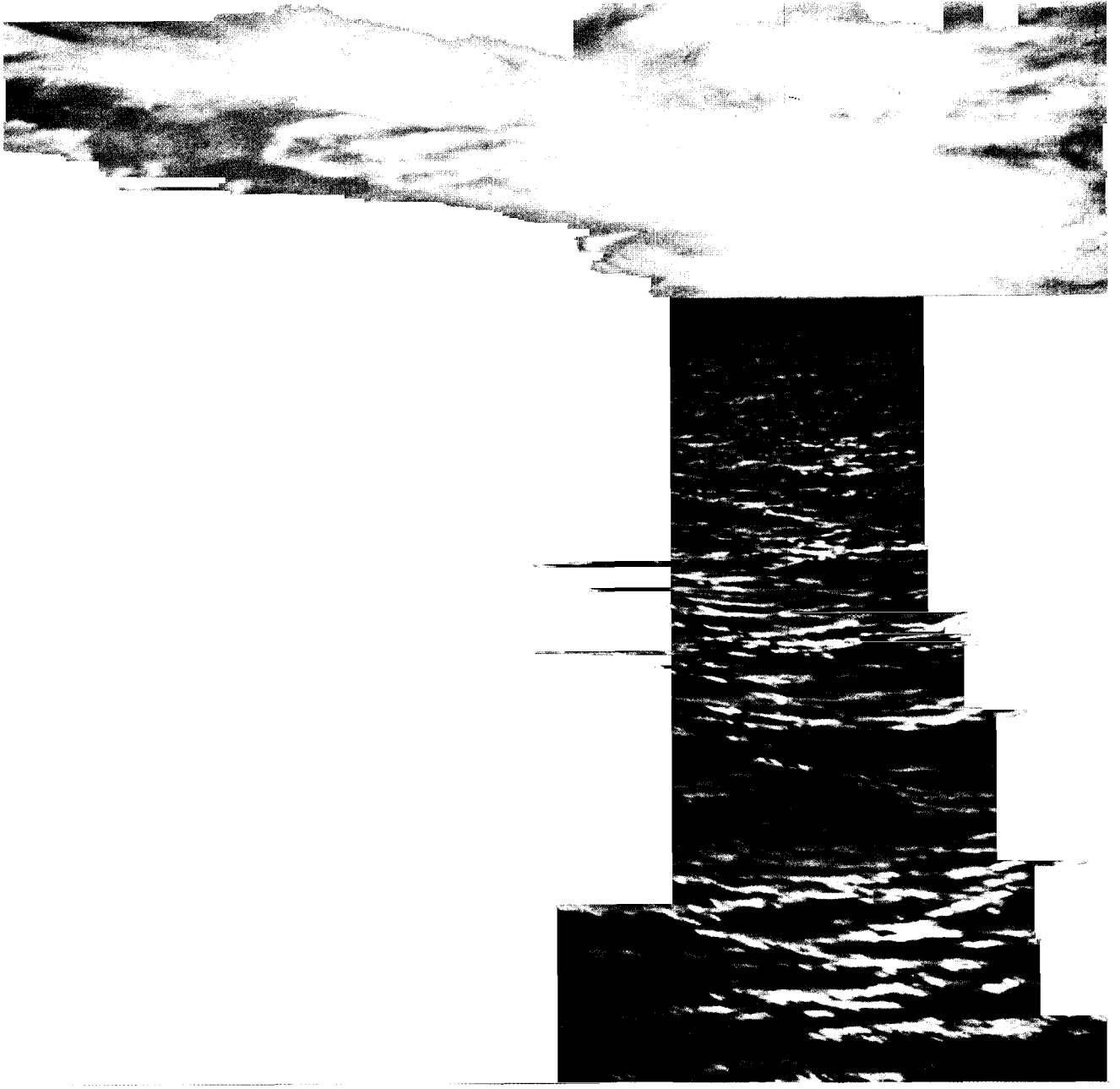

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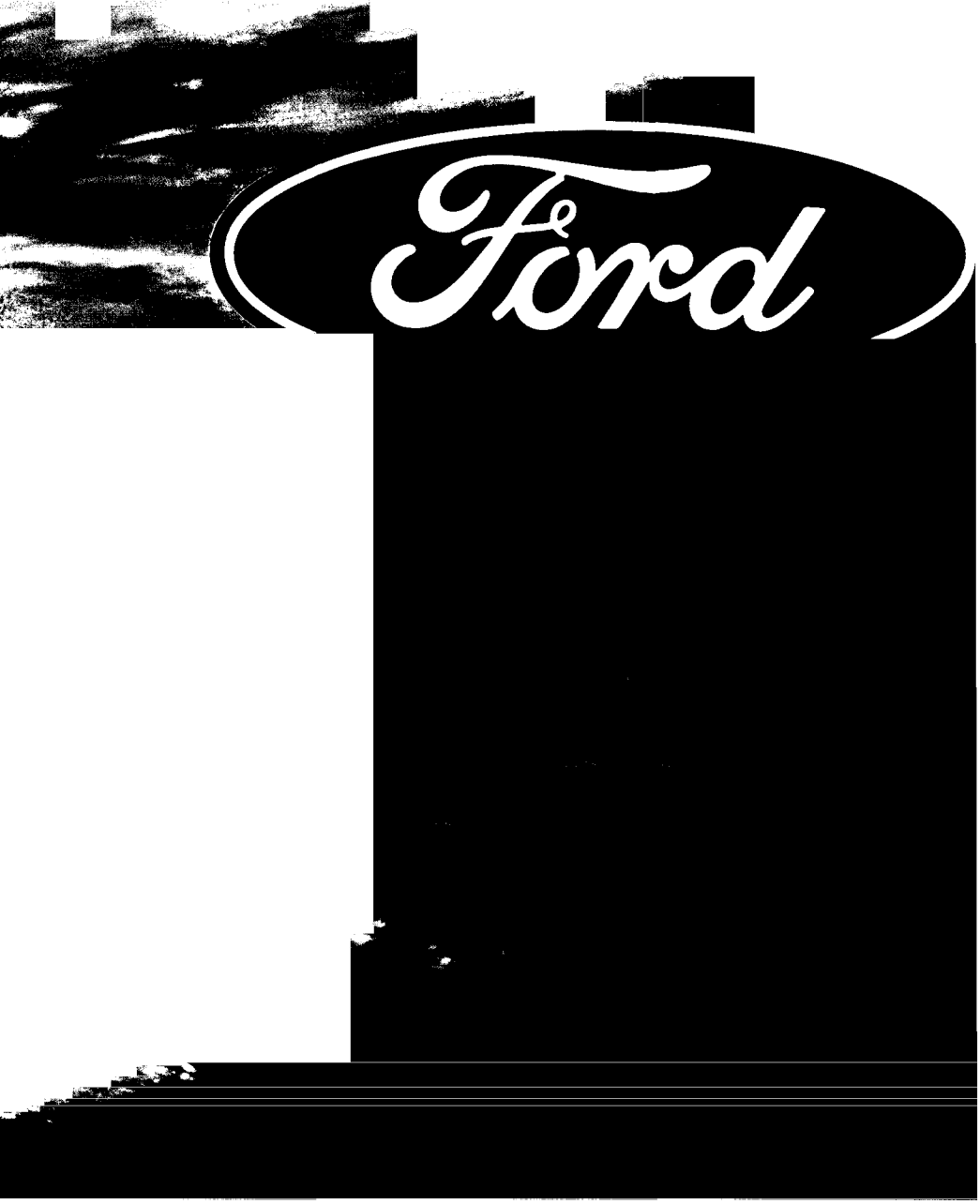

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difficult for Nunn to act as skeptical as his questioning might suggest. When combined with an unshakable respect for the military services characteristic of his region and upbringing, and with a personal nature that one former aide says is "trusting—willing to accept people at face value," Nunn's weak feel for the bureaucratic culture becomes a serious handicap.

Thus it was, for instance, discouraging to hear Nunn say that the purpose of his impressive cost-overrun amendment was, in his mind, "not to alert Sam Nunn so that I can run down and try to cancel the Bradley Fighting Vehicle [a new armored personnel carrier Nunn has criticized for poor design and cost overruns] but to alert the managers of the Department of Defense so *they* can take responsibility" (his emphasis). The reason these managers can be trusted to do so, he adds, is that they are "acting in good faith."

If you still wonder what's wrong with trust and respect and belief in "men of good faith," look at the domestic side of the budget. By believing that HEW or HUD or other agency officials they faced were acting in the sincere interest of the country, congressmen have fallen into the habit over the years of granting the wish of nearly every bureaucrat who testified he really and truly needed more money for his program. Conservatives have quite justifiably blamed liberals for that trait, and liberals have quite justifiably replied that conservatives rarely apply their skepticism about big government to the Pentagon.

Unfortunately, even when they do scrutinize the bureaucracy, few members of Congress, of any persuasion, have the ability to go beyond locating the buried bodies to the more critical matter of how they are buried—how the truth gets squashed.

The best illustration of how it happens is also the most familiar—the famous case of A. Ernest Fitzgerald, the Department of Defense analyst who testified in the late 1960s about the billion-dollar cost overrun on the Lockheed C-5A transport, at that time the largest overrun on any military project ever. For those whose attitude toward Fitzgerald has been colored by the interminable litigation of recent years, it is useful to recall that the only reason he originally was fired was that he *told the truth*—not to the Soviet Union, but to the U.S. Congress. Given that the first harassment of Fitzgerald had taken place during the Johnson administration, one might have expected Richard Nixon to seize the opportunity to embarrass his predecessor by publicly decorating Fitzgerald as a hero for fighting waste in LBJ's Pentagon. But the feeling within the executive branch against telling the truth to Congress runs so strong that Nixon came under intense pressure from his own people to make sure the whistle-blower was forced out.

If Sam Nunn had a better understanding of the bureaucracy, he might know what was really happening among the men of "good faith" whom he trusts to build less expensive weapons—the pats on the back when an official returns to the office after a successful day of jousting on the Hill. "They didn't lay a glove on you," the happy co-workers are inclined to chime in on these occasions, which is, of course, another way of saying that the person testifying was able to get through the hearing without providing any facts or relevant details about the problems of his program. Nunn has seen enough of these witnesses trying to wriggle out from under his tough cross-examination to know that they are not exactly scurrying back to the Pentagon to "take responsibility" for eliminating expensive and dubious weapons.

A Choice Not an Echo

Because Nunn is still a bit confused in this matter of when not to trust people—because he still itches, against all experience, to give the benefit of the doubt to men in uniform—his positions have been characterized by a hesitant incrementalist approach. For all of his efforts, Nunn can't help coming off as a senator whose reputation is better earned than it is used, whose skepticism never quite comes to a conclusion, even if that conclusion is something he feels very strongly about.

For instance, Nunn has been one of the most active and insightful critics of the All-Volunteer Force but still has not introduced legislation calling for a draft or national service. He talks about it a lot, he says he wants a bill, but he has put off acting on it, according to an aide, until a "consensus" develops. Who will develop that consensus if not Nunn? Nobody knows.

Nunn points with pride to his record on manpower issues—eliminating some generals and admirals, preventing last-minute promotions designed only to allow higher pensions. But on the big manpower questions, he has ducked. You didn't see Sam Nunn fighting the military's controversial 20-year retirement rule, which allows many officers to retire, collect a half-pay pension, take another government job, and retire and collect *another* government pension.

The unwillingness to pursue his instincts is even clearer on the weapons side. Nunn, along with many naval strategists, wants a larger Navy. In a recent analysis he explained how that goal is

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unaffordable given the Navy's penchant for large ships. This has not, however, led him to the obvious point extending from the analysis—namely that the Reagan administration's plan to build large AEGIS cruisers at $1.2 billion dollars each should be scrapped in favor of greater numbers of smaller, less expensive boats.

Another example of this trait that has especially annoyed some defense critics involves the B-1 bomber, which Nunn supported in 1977 but now opposes. By waiting until the last minute to announce his opposition, Nunn missed any chance to affect the debate, and the B-1 was approved.

Like the cautiousness of most senators, Nunn's has its roots both at home and in his perception of the Senate as an institution. The first of those is straightforward enough, though Nunn is perhaps too conscious of the voting power of conservative Georgians. One former aide recalls, for instance, that in 1975 Nunn believed he had ruined his Senate career when he voted to extend the Voting Rights Act. In 1978 his support of the Panama Canal treaties generated angry New Right epithets ("We Used to Have a Panama Canal. Now We Have Nunn.") and lots of nervousness, but he was reelected with better than 80 percent of the vote in both the primary and general election, the highest of any Democrat in the country that year.

The caution that grows out of his strategy for effectiveness in the Senate is ultimately more damaging. In an institution of colossal egos, Nunn knows his colleagues resent those who try to hog the limelight on the floor and in the press. And he worries about spreading himself too thin—"spinning my wheels in an area I'm going to lose in." But the effect is sometimes that same superficiality he strives so hard to avoid. "Every time I raise a question I don't have time to carry it to its logical conclusion," he says by way of excusing his lack of boldness. "If I did I'd have to stop raising the questions."

Except when a weapons issue directly affects his state, as in his impassioned support of Lockheed's C-5B against Boeing's 747 in the recent airlift debate, Nunn makes a policy of avoiding the role of crusader. "They had a group of liberal Democrats just after the Vietnam war and each senator picked out one weapon system and made it his cause. All they did in the military field was take on that weapon system for five years. It didn't make any difference whether the mission had changed or the means had changed or whatever, they were going after it. I don't think that's productive."

And what if the weapon really deserves to be killed, and can be argued against without the senator looking obnoxious or "liberal"? Well, unfortunately Nunn still hesitates to call for cancellation, except in extreme cases. One surprising explanation he offers for steering clear of most weapons issues is that he doesn't often know very much about the technologies of various systems, an interesting admission from a senator with his reputation. But it was true. In an interview, Nunn was entirely unaware, for instance, of an important and highly charged debate on the use of state-of-the-art radar. With only two years of placid Coast Guard duty behind him, he says he often defers to senators with first-hand experience, like Barry Goldwater and Howard Cannon—both pilots—on tactical air issues.

On nuclear questions, he has usually deferred to—or at least agreed with—Henry Jackson. One former aide to another Democratic senator recalls an Armed Services hearing in the spring of 1978 when Jackson asked Stennis for authorization of more strategic nuclear weapons. Nunn jumped in, echoing the concern. "What do you think we still need *spee*cifically?" Stennis is said to have replied. Jackson and Nunn said more strategic capability generally. "*Spee*cifically," Stennis repeated, firmer this time. Jackson could not come up with a list, and neither could Nunn.

This deference to the wisdom of others has waned some in recent years, but it remains characteristic of Nunn, and it helps explain why he has not put his stature and knowledge to better use. The reason he has not gone further—has not followed his logic where it leads—is partly that residual trust for all things military, partly the unreasonable fear of serious political consequences in Georgia, and partly an understandable concern about spreading himself too thin. But it involves something else, too: life in what might be called Washington's national security establishment, and the rules that establishment imposes on its members.

Capital R Responsible

From the time he first trooped into Mike Mansfield's office with great-uncle Carl Vinson to seek a place on the Armed Services Committee, Sam Nunn has sought to be a member of the Senate "club," a word reserved for those senators who function especially well within the peculiar constraints of the institution. Nunn is, for all of his tenacious dedication to the interests of his constituency, a budding fixture in a certain high-flying Washington orbit.

Is U.S. Ambassador-at-Large Vernon Walters having a small dinner for outgoing CIA Deputy

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HE MAY MAKE YOU MAD. HE WILL MAKE YOU THINK.

He's Charles Peters,
author of Tilting at Windmills

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Director Bobby Inman? Nunn and his wife Colleen are on the list. Does Nunn have an idea for a joint U.S.-Soviet crisis management post to monitor the possibility of accidental nuclear war? Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger invites the senator to the Pentagon for a private lunch to discuss it. Does it look as if Scoop Jackson is taking unfair credit in the press for originating the idea behind the crisis management post? Nunn feels perfectly comfortable calling up a reporter from *The New York Times* to straighten him out on which senator came up with the proposal first.

This is all standard enough for a prominent senator, but there is something about Nunn that allows him to operate in such an environment with particular ease. From the time he became president of the Perry, Georgia, Chamber of Commerce at age 24, Nunn has been not only ahead of his peers in terms of career, but decidedly ahead in understanding the requirements this kind of world places on someone trying to get ahead. If he still looks more like a small-town bank clerk than the stereotyped image of a silver-haired senator, he has long since learned to project a mature, senatorial impression. If he remains too conscious of his political base to be considered a full-blown creature of Washington, he is nonetheless highly attuned to the rhythms of life in the capital—the "rules."

This sense of comfort in a certain respectable, behind-the-scenes Washington life manifests itself politically in the idea of "consensus," which Nunn stresses repeatedly as a way of explaining why he doesn't believe it is his role to lead the charge for the Democrats against the Reagan defense plan. The notion of a consensus defense and foreign policy goes back to the late 1940s, when Arthur Vandenberg, an isolationist senator from Michigan, converted to internationalism. Vandenberg's conversion was marked by his support for the Marshall Plan and the creation of the NATO Alliance, the latter of which since has turned into the touchstone of this respectable (with a Capital R) approach. Sure enough, this

The Georgia Trap: A State In Love With The Military

If Sam Nunn has trouble following through on his proposal to rethink this country's defense aims, the biggest thing standing in his way will be his own state of Georgia, where the military is now the economic mainstay of the state, exceeding even agriculture.

"We're very above-board in the way we approach where military bases ought to be located," Richard Russell used to say. "That is, we share fifty-fifty—50 percent for Georgia and 50 percent for the rest of the nation."

"Senator Nunn has tried to continue that very fair tradition," says Arnold Punaro, Nunn's aide on defense issues.

For a time after Richard Russell and Carl Vinson left office, Georgia's bite of the defense pie decreased, but for each of the last five years, Georgia has been among the top three states in terms of new military construction. Right now, the state boasts 12 military complexes, which employ about 50,000 civilians and 70,000 soldiers, airmen, and sailors. These employees are supplemented by 160,000 military dependents, 30,000 National Guard and Reserve personnel, 85,000 military retirees, and thousands of civil service retirees.

The 12 bases touch nearly ever aspect of the U.S. military. Among the Air Force installations, Robins does the major maintenance for all the nation's C-130s and F-15s, houses a wing of B-52s, and much of the Air Force's software. Moody includes a wing of F-4s, and Dobbins features the largest aircraft factory in the world, which is owned by the government and leased to Lockheed.

Fort Benning does all infantry troop training for the Army, and Fort McPherson is where the Continental Army Command is headquartered. Fort Gordon is home of the Signal Corps, and Fort Stewart is the largest army base (in land area) east of the Mississippi.

The Navy can boast of Kings Bay Submarine Base, eastern port of a squadron of Poseidon nuclear subs. The Tridents will be based here, too, at a cost of $1.4 billion. Albany is home of a Marine Corps logistics base that has 19 warehouses. The list goes on and on.

And that's just the military bases. Among the contractors, Lockheed, Georgia, employs more than 13,000 in its Marietta plant, 8,000 more if the C-5B contract comes through. Rockwell, Pratt and Whitney, and other defense manufacturers employ at least seven thousand more.

Think of the challenges facing Sam Nunn this way: Each of his state's nine largest cities has a military installation nearby, and in seven of those cities the largest employer of civilian residents is either a military base or a defense manufacturer.

—*Thomas D. Boettcher*

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year, Sam Nunn returned from Europe with his most recent report on the state of the Alliance, his third since joining the senate. As usual it said nothing shocking, which suited the foreign policy establishment just fine.

As it is traditionally expressed in cloakrooms and salons and sober foreign policy journals, such respectability doesn't just mean you cooperate with the other party and with the president. It also means you keep your voice low. This view of national security policy came under pressure during the 1970s—Vietnam and CIA disclosures almost shattered it—but it's a tradition Nunn says he very much believes in. That's why his bold, highly partisan activity on a particular issue is so revealing.

The issue was the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) II treaty that came up for debate in the Senate in 1979. Earlier, Nunn had urged that the Armed Services Committee take the unusual step of questioning President Carter's nominee for director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Paul Warnke—a task generally believed to belong exclusively to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In 1979, the jurisdictional question came up again. Chairman Stennis strongly felt that it was not the role of the committee overseeing the military to pass judgment on a foreign policy question like SALT II. This was the traditionalist consensus-building approach Richard Russell always followed in such matters, but Nunn did nothing to embrace it and the Stennis position did not prevail.

This may seem like a simple turf question, but it goes to the heart of Nunn's position on SALT II, which was seen for a time as pivotal in the Senate debate. The senator believed that arms control, which in the past had been viewed as a foreign policy question, should not be separated from the issue of military strength. The "consensus" approach would have been to back the president in a serious matter of this kind, or, if interested in some modification or deal on the treaty, to pass the word *quietly* within the Senate club and the White House. Instead, Nunn went public. Showing his always keen sense of political opportunity, he used the SALT debate as a partisan forum to push for a four- to five-percent real increase in military spending. Without a commitment by Carter to such an increase, Nunn told the press he could not support SALT II, regardless of the specific merits of the treaty itself.

This approach was controversial (Warnke, now back in private law practice and free to speak more candidly, says, "It stinks—it's perilously close to blackmail"), but it worked. Nunn was not responsible for killing the treaty—it died because of the tempest over Soviet troops in Cuba and the invasion of Afghanistan—but he was responsible for helping forge a large public constituency for increasing defense spending. All of his cautious, measured, respectable inclinations had been set aside in favor of a full-blooded battle cry in support of a particular position. Nunn has no regrets about his role in 1979, and he won't admit it was partisan. But it surely was. In fact, some have suggested that the conservative drumbeat for more defense that started around that time helped pave the way for Reagan's election.

The reason Nunn's divisive tactic is relevant today has nothing to do with the merits of SALT II or whether arms control should or should not be held hostage to other matters. It has everything to do with how much Sam Nunn can be depended on to do what is required at present. The point is, if Nunn didn't worry about kicking up a little fuss then, he shouldn't worry now, when his position has been inverted.

Whether the change results from shifts in his thinking, or the Reagan defense policy, or both, it definitely has taken place. "At that time [during the SALT debate] I felt the Carter administration was placing entirely too much emphasis on arms control to the exclusion of a sound national security program," he said recently. "In the first 18 months, the Reagan administration's problem has been exactly the opposite." Where three years ago he pushed for across-the-board increases in defense spending, he now says that administration "needs to give people the sense that we're not just spending across the board."

So if Sam Nunn could break out of the club rules in the late 1970s on the need for more defense spending, he could certainly do so now on the need for less. The same linkage of foreign policy and defense goals that in 1979 was used to build a constituency for a stronger military could, in 1982, be used to build a constituency for a more efficient—and less grandiose—U.S. strategy.

That's why it's so disappointing to hear Nunn say things like, "I don't think I'm capable of laying out a comprehensive defense strategy; that has to start in the executive branch," and other such concessions to the tired old respectable consensus tradition. In 1979, Nunn didn't say, "I'll let the executive branch decide what our defense build-up should consist of." He came up with the proposals himself, proposals he hastens to add that were much more detailed and comprehensive than a simple across-the-board increase of four to

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five percent.

Right now, Nunn knows what the premise of the new U.S. strategy should be—that we don't have the money to project American power as we have in the past. And he knows that the Pentagon is having trouble building the right weapons—weapons that are affordable and that actually work. What he hasn't been able to do is move from saying that American defense should be rethought—a respectable enough view for op-ed pieces and think tanks—to actually putting himself on the line with some concrete suggestions on which changes should be made, which parts of the world we should pull back from and which elements of our force structure would be superfluous under the new strategy. That is a tall order, but reachable for a man of Nunn's abilities.

One suspects that the real reason Nunn won't take this step has little to do with his protest that it is beyond his capacity as a senator to do anything more than "get a dialogue going." Anyone who runs for president of the Chamber of Commerce at 24 and the U.S. Senate at 34 can hardly be considered lacking the requisite moxie. No, Nunn shuns the bold, inspired role because, right now, anyway, he must feel the price too high. The price of inching out a little on that limb of respectability, of occasionally risking error, of losing the warm feeling that comes with being popular among both the Walter Mondales and the Barry Goldwaters. Nunn craves that happy, safe middle ground. It makes him feel responsible.

In another sense, though, it really should be viewed as fear of responsibility, or even, if it can be said about an ambitious young senator, fear of leadership. At bottom the fear isn't really much different from that of the Pentagon colonel or planner Nunn faces so often across the table. If he steps out of line—if he tells Congress too much—he fears his credibility back at the office might well be shot.

The difference is that in the case of the bureaucrat the fear may be justified; it takes remarkable courage for him to follow the instinct for truth to its logical conclusions. But in the case of the senator, courage isn't really at issue. The respect will remain, the seat will be safe, the "credibility," built up over many years, will not dissipate overnight. In fact, it will expand. Sam Nunn may not know it yet, but everybody—even the cream of the Washington club—responds to leadership. Especially when it comes from a senator who is knowledgeable, hard-working, and the future chairman of the most powerful military committee in the Congress. ■

THE WASHINGTON MONTHLY

Journalism Award

for May and June 1982 is awarded to

John Doherty, *Reason*

Doherty, a commercial pilot, documents how the Federal Aviation Administration will waste several billions of dollars on an air collision avoidance system that may be less effective than a far cheaper model. The less expensive system has two characteristics the FAA finds damning: it would upset the agency's most vociferous constituents, private pilots, and it would operate independent of FAA ground controllers.

Ted Gup, *The Washington Post*

Gup goes beyond the familiar story of lobbyists plying their trade with powerful congressmen. He details the lobbyists' efforts to influence key staffers for the House Ways and Means Committee who have the ear of Chairman Dan Rostenkowski. Those efforts included several "fact-finding trips" to Las Vegas casinos and the NCAA basketball semi-finals.

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Detail, Progress of American Industry by Charles Davis. Courtesy of Seaview Hospital, N.Y. Photo by Antonio Suarez.

BRING BACK THE WPA

How we can pay for it . . . and why we can't afford not to.

by Timothy Noah

Laws, we know, are made to be broken, but sometimes they are broken on such a scale that you almost forget they exist at all.

Take the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act, the memorial to the late Minnesota senator that was signed into law by Jimmy Carter in 1978. By the time the long-debated bill actually passed, it had been watered down substantially. But its major provision was clear: By January 1983 the president was to reduce unemployment in the United States to four percent.

Timothy Noah is a staff writer for The New Republic. *Dan Weil and Brian Rosmaita provided research assistance.*

Well, with barely four months to go don't hold your breath. Thanks to Ronald Reagan and Paul Volcker, unemployment now hovers at about 9.5 percent. The official number of people without work, ten million, is almost the same as it was during the Great Depression. That *doesn't* include the 1.5 million Americans the Bureau of Labor Statistics calls "discouraged workers"—those who want to work but who've given up trying, usually after months of fruitless interviews and forays through the want ads.

But put aside for a moment all these people—the human capital that we might call the supply side of our sagging economy—and look at the demand side.

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Start with the streets in your own city. Chances are good they're strewn with litter and filled with potholes. Then there's the bridge down the road you drive over on your way to work each day—it's so badly rusted highway engineers have decided to close it. The equipment in the factory where you work is half a century old, and the box cars that haul its products away can't move faster than 20 miles an hour because the tracks are so decrepit. Your children's school is a fire hazard. The walls in the subway you take downtown are caving in. The dam at the city's reservoir is webbed with huge—and growing—cracks.

What is usually called the nation's infrastructure is crumbling from neglect. Bear with a few of these statistics for a moment. According to Pat Choate and Susan Walter, authors of *America in Ruins: Beyond the Public Works Pork Barrel,* the interstate highway system is deteriorating so fast that 2,000 miles of road require reconstruction every year. One out of five bridges in America needs major rehabilitation or reconstruction. The country's 750 largest cities will require $100 billion in the next two decades to maintain their water systems. (For a case study of how the infrastructure deteriorates so badly, see Lyle Crowley and Jacob Weisberg, "The Road to Ruin," page 48.)

That's not to mention the other objects of national neglect that aren't made of concrete, steel, or asphalt. Across the country thousands of libraries are being shuttered early, or just closed down, for lack of personnel. With the "Keep America Beautiful" campaign of the sixties now only a memory, our roadsides and city streets look worse than those in most other industrialized nations. Broken glass has replaced grass in many of the 35,000 municipal parks. Every day, tons of the nation's most valuable topsoil are washed away, the lessons of the Depression-era Dust Bowl forgotten. And though we insist ours is a compassionate society, millions of elderly, mentally ill, and physically handicapped spend their days alone and uncared for.

This drum roll should sound familiar. After all, people of just about every persuasion, from the delegates to last June's Democratic party mini-convention to self-proclaimed Tory George Will, have called attention to what the August 2 *Newsweek* cover story called "The Decaying of America."

Unfortunately, anguishing over the problem is usually as far as it goes. Only a few seem to realize that America's oversupply of unemployed labor and the crying demand for investment in our nation's infrastructure are problems that are made for each other. On the one hand we have millions collecting government benefits who'd rather be working; on the other hand we have potholes, wobbly bridges, and collapsing subway tunnels galore. Unless the federal government is prepared to give up the idea of interstate commerce altogether, it must take the lead in making sure this basic structural work gets done. Even George Washington understood that. One of the largest items in the first budget of the United States was something then called "internal improvements."

Fairwork

Two major groups of unemployed Americans would benefit from a federally sponsored

Unemployed, Detroit, Michigan, 1932. Courtesy of University of Illinois Press & Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

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program to rebuild the infrastructure. The first consists of some of the 11 million people—two-thirds of them children—who now rely on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the nation's primary welfare program. Unable to find jobs, the single women who head these families must try to subsist on benefits that are often shockingly inadequate. In Mississippi a family of three receives just $96 in cash and $183 in food stamps each month. Even in a fairly affluent state like Maryland, the total benefits equal $414 a month, or only 70 percent of the official poverty level. Give a full-time job to a welfare mother who can work and her family would be better off than it is now in all but a handful of states.

The second major labor pool consists of the nation's jobless. Of the ten million now officially labeled as unemployed, each month 350,000 exhaust their regular unemployment benefits, which last 26 weeks in most states. Then there are the 1.5 million discouraged workers, whose ranks have grown 50 percent in just the last year. Mostly male, these workers usually receive no unemployment or welfare benefits, though they often have families to support.

A straightforward trade: a job for an AFDC or unemployment check.

For lack of a better word, let's call the marriage of job creation and infrastructure repair "fairwork." Under such a program, those who've exhausted their regular unemployment benefits, whether they're factory workers or office managers, would be eligible for a variety of jobs, from filling potholes to pouring concrete for bridges to cleaning up city parks. Many would choose to work only long enough to tide them over until the economy revives and they could return to their regular jobs. But for millions, particularly the "discouraged workers," fairwork would provide more than a job. It would train them in skills such as operation of heavy machinery, welding,

Relief Blues by O. Louis Guglielmi. WPA/Federal Art Project. Courtesy of the National Museum of American Art.

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or construction work—skills helpful later in finding work in the private sector. As for those on AFDC, they could choose to work on construction projects, or, more likely, in a variety of other public service jobs such as library work or caring for the elderly. All participants would receive health insurance and the minimum wage (now $3.35 an hour) and would be subject to the same proviso: Those eligible for fairwork who choose not to participate cannot receive regular unemployment or welfare benefits. (For more on what fairwork participants would do, see sidebar on page 45.)

It's a straightforward trade: a meaningful, financially rewarding job in exchange for an AFDC grant or an unemployment check. Most of the jobless would benefit from substantially increased earnings, not to mention the psychological boost of keeping busy and learning marketable skills. As for the public, the economic benefits of a rehabilitated infrastructure would ripple throughout the economy.

Fairwork needn't bust the budget. Cutting defense and eliminating some tax cuts and COLAs will pay for it.

The Driller by Harold Lehman. Courtesy of the National Museum of American Art.

So why is such a program—usually dubbed "workfare"—getting such short shrift despite its obvious benefits? The reason is depressingly simple: the concept offends ideological taboos on both the right and the left.

In theory, no conservative worth his Adam Smith necktie would be against fairwork. After all, didn't Ronald Reagan himself often boast that his workfare program in California removed people from the welfare rolls? Yes, he did—but that program involved only a few welfare recipients, most of whom found jobs in the private sector or performed make-work tasks for the state bureaucracy. Suggest a far more ambitious program, run by the federal government and directed at more than just welfare recipients, and conservatives will

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launch into a spirited attack on FDR, the WPA, and the Socialist (or Fascist, take your pick) New Deal.

For sheer mean-spiritedness, it's hard to beat George Gilder, the preeminent guru of Reaganomics. In his best-selling *Wealth and Poverty*, Gilder confessed that he didn't even like Reagan's California experiment because it was based on "the same illusion that was earlier found in the argument for a guaranteed national income: the mirage of a good welfare system, the idea that one can create a 'rational' and 'compassionate' program that raises truly needy recipients above the poverty line . . . while requiring all able-bodied recipients to work." There's just no pleasing some people, although it's useful to remember that this comes from the same writer who once observed that poor men are being "cuckolded by the compassionate state." If Gilder's welfare is adultery, his workfare must be like group sex.

Why should a child be penalized if his or her parent wasn't in the workforce when calamity struck?

Unfortunately, liberals are prone to similar fits of logical vacuity when it comes to workfare. It's a tenet of liberal faith that the nation's unemployed and welfare-dependent will jump at the chance of having a decent and meaningful job. Yet dare suggest that the same government that provides the job should be able to require recipients to take it, and most liberals act as if you've urged the repeal of the Thirteenth Amendment. The words "coercion" and "slavery" have a way of slipping into these discussions. "Forcing me to do something I don't want to do, that's slavery," complained one Ohio workfare participant on a recent "MacNeil-Lehrer Report." A paper issued by the National Urban League treads a bit more lightly, arguing that "workfare would actually lead to more self-disdain through the creation of the 'welfare job'—the modern-day equivalent to the workhouse."

Conservatives may be stingy when it comes to giving the truly needy adequate benefits and in opposing government-sponsored job programs. But they are right about one thing: No one with the ability and the circumstances to work should automatically be entitled to perpetual checks from the government in return for staying home. All government benefit programs have eligibility requirements, and in many respects a work requirement backed by a meaningful job is fairer than most. That liberals prefer to ignore this has a lot to do with why they've been losing elections lately.

One of the WPA's biggest backers is Ronald Reagan.

But the best argument for fairwork is the example of the working poor. Millions of people in this country now willingly perform work that is unpleasant and low-paying. Some of them insist on doing so even though they could receive more money on welfare. That's because there's an element of pride in any job. Ask a trash collector why he bothers with a job a sociologist might label "demeaning" and he may consider dumping you head-first into a trash bin.

Indeed, for most able-bodied people, it's the stigma of dependency that drives them into the workplace. This view, more compassionate than Gilder's, is amply supported by evidence. One third of all welfare families leave the AFDC rolls each year, for example. And while a woman might be forced to rely on AFDC on and off for most of her life, the average length of time she doesn't work is less than two years. People don't want to be on welfare, they want to work. So what's unfair about giving them that work instead of a welfare check?

The same reasoning applies to the unemployed, although most people have grown accustomed to pretending it shouldn't. We're not in the habit of thinking of unemployment compensation as welfare; instead, we think of these payments as insurance benefits. In that sense unemployment insurance is like social security, which awards money in equal measure to the impoverished widow and the elderly millionaire. Likewise, the unemployed auto worker who's the father of five is entitled to the same check as an unmarried young man who arranges to be laid off so he can go sailing. As long as the latter periodically drops in at the nearest unemployment office—the Virgin

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Islands will do—it doesn't matter how much he's got in his bank account.

The important lesson here is that government benefits such as social security and unemployment compensation should not be thought of as inalienable—and inexhaustible—rights. Accordingly, there's nothing wrong with a fairwork program that would substitute federal jobs for certain unemployment benefits. Workers would continue to receive 26 weeks of "regular unemployment." But the 13 weeks of extended benefits now available in most states would be abolished; the congressional proposal for another 13 weeks would be dropped as well. In their place the government would offer a fairwork job to those who had exhausted their regular benefits. Recipients could continue to work as long as they wished. There would be no favoritism; the laid-off insurance executive and RIF-ed civil servant would work alongside the furloughed autoworker and unemployed plumber.

Of course, a truly equitable unemployment compensation program would treat the laid-off workers the same as abandoned mothers with identical family obligations. Why should a child be penalized if his or her single parent wasn't in the work force when economic calamity struck? Today a double standard exists: The mostly male recipients of unemployment receive relatively generous benefits compared to women on AFDC. And, while AFDC has an elaborate system of supervision and auditing to ensure that recipients aren't cheating, meaningful enforcement of unemployment rules is virtually nonexistent. Along with fairwork, the government should institute a uniform audit system for both AFDC and unemployment that will randomly examine enough recipients to make all beneficiaries fearful of cheating.

Featherfare

Having detailed the basic principles, let's look at how fairwork *shouldn't* work.

At the minimum, fairwork should help support the most basic of American institutions: the family. Yet sensible as this principle is, it's now being flagrantly violated. Under the approving gaze of none other than President Reagan and the New Right, many states are requiring AFDC mothers with three- and four-year-olds to leave them with babysitters or at day care centers if work is available. Before, women with children under six could choose to stay at home without jeopardizing their AFDC grant. In Michigan, the age limit for children was recently lowered to a mere six months. There's no small amount of hypocrisy involved here: the same conservatives who oppose abortion and extol the virtues of family life are now denying the care of their own mothers to young children, who are poor to begin with. What little protest has been raised has come primarily from liberals, who are finally discovering a healthy skepticism about the virtues of day care, particularly when it's offered at cut-rate prices. A humane fairwork program would allow a woman with children under six to remain on AFDC and would raise her benefits to make them commensurate with those received by fairwork participants. Once her children reached the age of six, the woman would have a choice: either accept a job or lose her AFDC benefits, unless she could prove she should be exempted due to her health or other legitimate reasons.

For millions, "fairwork" would provide more than a temporary job.

A workfare program in New York City provides another object lesson in what to avoid. Roughly 10,000 people are employed there in the Public Works Program, a compulsory work project tied to the state's general assistance program. Rather than receive benefits, participants are "employed" through PWP, nearly all in civil servant jobs.

So far, so good. But participants complain that they are doing superfluous work. "It's the only job I've ever had," says one, "where whether you do your job very well or poorly doesn't matter." "I come here to relax," admits another. "I go home to work." Why aren't these people allowed to do something useful? Because the state forbids it.

No kidding. New York state law prohibits PWP participants from performing "any work ordinarily and actually performed by regular employees of any department or any other unit of a county, city, or town." This law was passed to assuage fears of unionized employees that the government might do something logical—

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like try to reduce expenses by replacing some civil servants with welfare recipients. But enforcement of this law hasn't satisfied District Council 37 of the Association of Federal, State and Municipal Employees, which has filed suit to abolish PWP—an action taken after the union failed to organize these workers. Sufficiently intimidated, the city is making sure to keep PWP workers away from any work that might be construed as useful.

The beauty of the fairwork program is that there would be no need to create "make-work" jobs. That's not to say fairwork would be easy to administer. The infrastructure's needs first must be catalogued and evaluated. Divisions of responsibility must be established; for example, state and local governments should be required to continue investing some of their own money in public works so the federal government doesn't end up footing the entire bill.

Powerful institutions also must be convinced of the merits of fairwork. Labor unions will fear that their members will lose work or be pressured to make substantial wage concessions if the government can use unemployed workers on its construction projects. The unions are partly right—fairwork would lower the labor costs to government of repairing its facilities. But there's no reason fairwork can't help both the public and the unions. Unions would benefit from the additional employment fairwork would generate in the private sector. And not only would the government hire many of the unions' unemployed members, but it would need to continue contracting out a portion of its business in those areas that require skilled workers. While fairwork certainly wouldn't give every unemployed construction worker $15 an hour, it would give him a job—something hundreds of thousands of those workers don't have right now.

Hey, Hey, Hey for the WPA

If this scheme sounds vaguely familiar, it's because something very much like it was tried once before, when the country was in a similar mess. The mess, you'll recall, was the Great Depression. The solution then was a smorgasbord of public works programs: the Civil Works Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Public Works Administration, and the Works Projects Administration, to name just the most prominent.

Everyone has a favorite story about a New Deal boondoggle. Mine involves a gymnasium whose retractable floor revealed a swimming pool below, a contraption featured in Frank Capra's film, *It's A Wonderful Life*. It was built by the WPA, not for Jimmy Stewart's sleepy little home town of Bedford Falls, but for Beverly Hills High School, which, thanks to an impressive tax base made possible by movies such as *It's a Wonderful Life*, managed very well during the Depression.

For all the similar stories about WPA waste, one easily could get the impression that half of WPA's funds went to putting Orson Welles's New York theater project on the dole or to paying able-bodied men to lean on shovels all day. Yet less than one percent of WPA projects had anything to do with the arts. And the occasional horror story notwithstanding, few government efforts in American history have resulted in such substantial and long-lasting benefits.

The CCC, which provided jobs for a half-million youths at its peak, is responsible for many of the nation's forest trails and conservation projects. At its peak, the WPA had three million people on its payroll, and by the end of its first year had built over 6,000 schools, 5,000 other public buildings, 7,000 water and sewer systems, and 130,000 rural roads. Go to just about any small town in America and you likely will find some tangible evidence of the New Deal's legacy, whether it's a post office, a courthouse, a city hall, a park, or a school. Many have held up better than buildings constructed in the 1950s and 60s.

One of the WPA's biggest enthusiasts is none other than Ronald Reagan, who gushed to an interviewer last December about how much the WPA had done for his home town of Dixon, Illinois. Scoffing at those critics who considered WPA "make work," Reagan said, "I can take you to our town and show you things, like a river front that was once swamp . . . is now a beautiful park-like place built by WPA." The WPA also gave Dixon an airport, not to mention work for Reagan's father.

When it comes to today's unemployed, these lessons seem lost on the president. Huge tax cuts and a balanced budget, which helped precipitate the last Great Depression, will somehow prevent the next one, Reagan insists, while a WPA-style public works program would be riddled with waste, fraud, and inefficiency. What is distressing is that Reagan is

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hardly alone in these views; even many Democrats believe that the federal government would bungle any large-scale public works program.

What the skeptics overlook is that for all the understandable haste in getting the Depression-era programs into operation, the government proved remarkably efficient. The WPA spent $61 per worker each month, $46 of which went to wages and only $2 to administrative expenses (most of the balance purchased materials). That $2 figure holds one of the more encouraging lessons of the New Deal: we don't need a bloated bureaucracy to put America back to work.

Aren't we forgetting something? Yes, we are. If this proposal to provide jobs for the unemployed, reform welfare, and rebuild the infrastructure is to get off the ground, the price will be high. Of course, some of the money already is being spent—in welfare grants and unemployment compensation, for example. But hundreds of billions of additional dollars still will be required, divided about equally between materials and wages.

There's Plenty of Work To Do

Rebuilding America's crumbling infrastructure isn't a matter of putting 85,000 adults back to work for six months, as a Democratic proposal now before Congress contemplates. Instead, it's an effort that can employ millions of people, full time, for a decade or more, in work that teaches them valuable skills while building the foundation for our future prosperity.

As for the infrastructure itself, consider one specific project: repairing the interstate highway system. According to the Federal Highway Administration, necessary maintenance and repair work on the 42,500-mile system will require more than 250,000 people a year for the next decade. Kenneth Ziems of the FHA, who administers a federal training program for unskilled roadside construction workers, estimates that 30 percent of these workers—or about 75,000—can master their skills in six months or less. Some of these jobs require almost no training, and many, such as operating a jackhammer, can be learned in a matter of weeks. The remainder of the jobs could be filled by laid-off construction workers and fairwork participants who choose to remain in the program long enough to learn more complicated tasks, such as operating bulldozers and graders.

The 75,000 figure seems small next to the ten million Americans now out of work. But rehabilitating the interstate system would cost only $20 billion over the next decade. Compare that to the more than $1 trillion the U.S. Conference of Mayors estimates is needed over the next ten years to rebuild the nation's deteriorated roads, bridges, subways, ports, and water systems. Assuming the same proportion of low-skilled workers—and many projects could take a substantially higher proportion—at least four million workers could be employed initially, and far more as people mastered various skills. This figure doesn't account for the millions of new jobs generated in the private sector to supply the raw materials and finished products necessary for these projects.

But fairwork shouldn't stop with the infrastructure. The nation has also neglected many of its natural assets: its forests, range land, and topsoil, for example. The American Forestry Association estimates that more than ten million acres of national forest need replanting or rehabilitation. The Interior Department reports that 63 million acres of public land suffer from soil erosion. Sidney Howe, executive director of the Human Environment Center and a leading proponent of a bill to revive the Civilian Conservation Corps, estimates the nation easily could employ a half-million people in remedying this neglect.

Then there's the urban environment. Walk just a few blocks in a major American city and you'll probably find enough litter to fill a large trash can. Little wonder. In New York City, for example, there are 1,600 fewer sanitation workers than there were 28 years ago. And if only half the nation's 35,000 state, county, and municipal parks added five people to their payrolls to perform badly needed maintenance work, 100,000 jobs would be created, according to the Department of Labor.

Other jobs would directly benefit the old, the young, and the sick. The Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs estimated in 1978 that two million elderly, mentally ill, and physically handicapped were in need of home assistance. Providing that care could keep 200,000 people busy—and could actually save the government money by eliminating the need for hospital or nursing home care.

It's clear the size of a fairwork program wouldn't be limited by the amount of meaningful work to be done, but by the imagination. And that doesn't mean inventing these jobs—just realizing where they are.

—Timothy Noah and Dan Weil

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That last estimate may stop you cold, particularly if you're justifiably concerned that the prospect of large federal budget deficits for years to come will destroy the incentive for long-term investment in our economy. But if you think hard about national priorities, a large-scale public works program is not just affordable, it's absolutely necessary.

Fairwork needn't bust the budget. Most thoughtful critics, Republican and Democrat, realize at least $20 billion could be pared from Reagan's defense budget without jeopardizing national security. Putting that money into rebuilding the infrastructure would be a much better tonic for our ailing economy than giving it to a relatively small number of defense contractors to build weapons that are unnecessary, often defective, and ultimately destined for the scrap heap. Invested in public works, this money would go for materials and labor that would directly stimulate badly needed consumer spending, while leaving the rest of us with a rehabilitated infrastructure that in turn would spur more economic growth.

America has been living off the New Deal's foresight for a half century.

A second major source of public capital is the ten-percent income tax cut scheduled to take effect in 1983. The cut, the last installment of the Kemp-Roth bill, will deprive the Treasury of $30 billion a year. Eliminating the cut and investing that money in public works would be a far better gamble than "trickle-down" economics; in fact, it wouldn't really be a gamble at all. Repairing the infrastructure is exactly the kind of productive investment supply-side enthusiasts have long extolled, but is now being passed up as the wealthy turn to money market funds, Treasury notes, antique jewelry, and a host of other speculative ventures that do little for our economic future. It's useful to think of public works as "trickle-up" economics, a more direct way of reviving our economy while helping those most in need.

Finding even more money won't be difficult. Giving cost-of-living raises to federal employees and retirees—civilian and military—won't put the unemployed back to work. Eliminating these increases and putting the nearly $10 billion saved into fairwork would pay the wages of almost 1.5 million people. Congress could also repeal all or part of the ten-percent tax cut that took effect this July, redirecting up to $30 billion more into public works. So more than enough money is available; the real question is whether the nation prefers a profligate military, overpaid civil servants, and the encouragement of wasteful investment as an alternative to giving idle Americans something important to do.

But there's a more compelling argument for making a substantial investment in fairwork. If we're interested in the long-term health of the economy, money spent rebuilding the infrastructure is the best investment we can make. The roads, bridges, subways, ports, airports, dams, and water systems built during the Depression were a major cause of the nation's post-World War II boom—the greatest period of sustained economic growth in American history. The dams in the Tennessee Valley and the Pacific Northwest, by providing work for thousands and electricity for millions, brought prosperity that has paid for the original investment many times over. Modern airports made the nation an international giant in the burgeoning airline industry. To compete in today's increasingly competitive international economy, the nation can't afford *not* to rebuild its infrastructure.

In a sense, America has been living off the New Deal's foresight for the last half century—and the time is long past due to recognize it. Some might say that times are tough, that interest rates are high and money is difficult to find. Yet times were even tougher during the Depression; rather than using that as an excuse, the nation used it as an opportunity. That era's leaders knew the hopes of the jobless didn't lie in granting large tax breaks to private industry; after all, if a company's potential customers didn't have money to buy their products to begin with, a strategy of cutting taxes was senseless. Likewise, Reagan's tax cuts, as well as the enthusiasm in certain Democratic circles for government-sponsored research and development efforts to promote high technology, will take years to pay off, if they pay off at all.

Fairwork, which revives the now-forgotten promise of Humphrey-Hawkins, is a far better answer. Not only will such a program rebuild the infrastructure on which the economy depends, but it will guarantee the immediate creation of millions of jobs. And right now, at least ten million people could use them. ■

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*Henry David Aiken, Brandeis Univ.

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THE ROAD TO RUIN

A dispatch from the front lines in one city's losing war against potholes.

by Lyle Crowley and Jacob Weisberg

Driving, we've been told, used to be a lot more fun. To find out why that has changed, we paid a call recently on a man who works for the city of Washington, D.C. and goes by the name "Mr. Pothole." We were interested in talking to him about a unique driving experience familiar to residents of Washington and many other big cities across the country. Nationally, this experience causes at least a billion dollars' damage each year to cars and wastes a billion gallons of gas in sudden stops and starts. Personally, it causes chipped teeth, steering wheels in the gut, $300 auto repairs, and sundry other side effects as a result of just traveling from one place to another.

Mr. Pothole, also known as Stanley Ather, met our initial ice-breaking jests with a frigid stare, so we got down to business.

"Isn't there enough money to fill all the potholes?" we asked.

"There are basically no potholes in the District of Columbia."

"None?"

"Only a few that we can't find."

We glanced at each other while Ather, a 16-year veteran of pothole wars, sat in silence. Had the problem been eradicated while we sat in the waiting room? Noticing our bewilderment, Ather explained that there was a simple system under which all potholes reported by the public are repaired within 48 hours: He strolled confidently to a large metal filing cabinet and told us to pick out a report, any report. The pothole in the report we selected took 25 days to repair. "Ahem, let's try another," Ather suggested.

As we later learned, Mr. Pothole wasn't all that wrong. The city *is* filling the potholes brought to its attention. . . and filling them. . . and filling them. This is especially true right now, because Mayor Marion Barry is up for reelection. "We've spent more than a million dollars on this in the last few months," Barry told one of our editors while campaigning at a local watering hole known as the Tune Inn. "Unfortunately, the repairs last only a short time."

The problem is *the way* potholes are filled in the District and in many other cities. "The theory is that you can't find time to do it right, but you can find time to do it over," says Jerry Donaldson of Ralph Nader's Center for Auto Safety. Those who fill the holes readily admit that the "repairs" will last only a few months, or, at most, a couple of seasons. That's because the bulk of potholes are repaired simply by slopping hot asphalt into a hole. When the asphalt packs down, the new bump is almost as bad as the old hole; until that happens, it's so loosely fitted that a die-hard road-hater could easily spoon it out.

Why so many streets in Washington and the rest of our nation's cities have come to resemble grenade practice grounds is pretty clear. The history of potholes is a history of neglect, of ignoring roads for matters that seemed more important at the time, like higher salaries for desk-bound bureaucrats or glamorous municipal convention centers. Most mayors love to dedicate new buildings; keeping the streets repaired, on the other hand, doesn't lend itself to ribbon-cutting ceremonies and getting on the evening news. Here in Washington another factor in the pothole explosion has been a liberal hostility to roads and highways that turned a reasonable preference for mass transit into an absurd crusade.

Pothole Potpourri

"I think it's immoral for somebody to drive a car downtown," Douglas Schneider once told a reporter. Schneider wasn't a bicyclist or an energy-conscious grandmother who liked to take the bus. He was director of the Department of Transportation for the city of Washington, D.C.

From 1975 until his resignation in 1980 Schneider spent his days searching for new ways to channel funds from street repair to his first love, the city's rapidly expanding Metro subway. His crippling blow to roads came in 1976, when he

Lyle Crowley and Jacob Weisberg, interns at The Washington Monthly, *now walk to work.*

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convinced the city council to abolish the District of Columbia's highway trust fund, always a favorite target for liberals. By wiping out the fund, which was financed by the gasoline tax, money once dedicated for road resurfacing and pothole repair could be fed to the Metro, which eagerly gobbled it down.

It wasn't as if Metro's fate hung in the balance, since the highway trust fund money accounted for only a small percentage of Metro's cost. The truth was that Douglas Schneider hated cars so much that he waged a tireless guerrilla war against them and their occupants. When the city received federal funds earmarked to allow motorists to make right turns on red lights, how did Schneider spend the money? By putting up "No Right on Red" signs at virtually every major intersection in Washington.

Schneider realized that, despite mild protests, no one was going to stop him from diverting funds to the Metro project—the symbol of the city's growth. He essentially duped the press and his bosses, Mayor Walter Washington and his successor, Marion Barry, into believing that his anti-motorist schemes were harmless. In all the articles in *The Washington Post's* lengthy file on Schneider, the paper never once stopped to consider that by deferring maintenance, Schneider was laying the basis for a true street crisis. Like almost everyone else, the *Post* missed the point that as roads are neglected they deteriorate further, which sends the cost of eventual repair soaring. Assuming the usual 25-year life-cycle for streets, Washington should have been resurfacing about 40 of its 1,100 miles of streets each year. By 1980, Schneider's last year in office, road resurfacing had dwindled to an annual total of *six* miles.

Resurfacing is different from haphazardly filling potholes. It is the life-blood of a healthy street network. District of Columbia officials admit that when road resurfacing is postponed until the underlying base begins to deteriorate, rebuilding costs increase six-fold. In resurfacing only six miles a year, Schneider must have been assuming roads would last 200 years. Or, more likely, he was assuming nothing at all, except perhaps that cars and trucks weren't worth bothering with—and that he wouldn't be around long enough to catch the blame.

Scrimping on preventive maintenance is not unique to Washington. Cities are always facing budget crises, and road maintenance is often the first service to be cut. Schneider, however, didn't just cut back; he actually *turned down* money available from the federal government for road repair. A 1978 exchange before the House Appropriations subcommittee went as follows:

Rep. William H. Natcher: "Have we reached a point where we should put in some additional money [for street repair] this year?"

Mr. Schneider: "I don't think so."

Upon examining funding reports, we discovered that Schneider threw money back to the Federal Highway Administration as well. During his tenure, Schneider passed up nearly $500 million in matching funds available to Washington's Department of Transportation. He turned down more than $10 million targeted for bridge work—despite the fact that Washington is known to have some of the worst bridges in the country. Fortunately Schneider resigned just before the offers were to expire, allowing his successors to snap up most of the $500 million.

Anxious to talk to Schneider, we were referred by his consulting firm to his telephone answering machine. But Schneider doesn't have one, and if

A POTHOLE IS BORN:

If you've ever left a bottle of Pepsi in the freezer and had to clean up afterwards, you have some idea of how potholes are born. Water that seeps under pavement expands when it freezes and contracts when the temperature rises. Repeated freezing and thawing weakens the asphalt, which eventually cracks and crumbles under the weight of cars and trucks.

Salt is another cause of road and bridge deterioration. Because salt lowers the freezing point of water, cities use it to help melt ice and snow on the roads, hoping to reduce accidents. But many cities over-use salt, a practice that, by increasing the number of freeze/thaw cycles, can speed up the birth of potholes, not to mention corrode steel bridges and the undersides of cars. Some cities even resort to prophylactic techniques, salting roads *before* big snow storms that often never arrive.

While salt may play havoc with the roads, it's still considered politically prudent to use too much instead of too little. No mayor in the United States wants to suffer the fate that befell Mayors Michael Bilandic of Chicago and John Lindsay of New York, both of whom felt the wrath of the voters after failing to get snow off the streets quickly enough.

—*L.C. and J.W.*

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he did, it would serve little purpose. Recently he went elsewhere to lend his advice on transportation issues—Saudi Arabia, to be precise. Drive slowly in Riyadh.

The Old Lady Factor

Since Schneider's departure a year and a half ago, Washington's pothole repair performance has gone in the only direction it could: Up. True, we discovered that the pothole hotline number Mr. Ather told us about isn't in service. Nor did the craters in our alley get filled in 48 hours; it took nine days and might have taken much longer had we not reminded Schneider's successor, Tom Downs, about them during an interview. But at least the effort is being made.

One question remained, however. Why is the city repairing the potholes so they won't stay filled much beyond the upcoming mayoral election? "The important thing is to get some material in there to keep the liability down," Mr. Pothole explained.

Ah, liability. Here at last was an explanation for why so few streets are repaired permanently by resurfacing instead of having crews dribble a little asphalt into a hole that will reappear soon after they return to the shop. The way the law works, if the city has been informed of a dangerous pothole, it's liable for any damage until the pothole is "repaired." If there has been no prior complaint, liability is much harder to prove. In other words, if you plan to wreck your car or wound your body driving over a pothole, it's prudent to call the road maintenance department first to report which one you plan to hit.

The liability point answered another of our questions. Why was the District of Columbia spending more than twice as much on repairing sidewalks and gutters—$2.6 million—as on potholes? Part of the explanation is that because curb repair takes some skill, most jobs are contracted out, which is expensive. According to Charlie Williams, head engineer for the Bureau of Construction and Maintenance, $130 can repair 20 potholes but only four feet of curb.

The more significant reason potholes get shortchanged, even though they inconvenience more people, has to do with what cruelly might be called the "old lady factor." Statistics show that men don't fall very often on sidewalks, or, when they do, they're often too embarrassed to let anyone know. Elderly women, on the other hand, not only tend to let city hall know they've fallen, but they sue—for big money. City records are filled with hundreds of pothole claims filed by male drivers for a few hundred dollars each and only a handful of sidewalk suits filed by female pedestrians—for several hundred thousand dollars each. However, it's not the gender of the litigants that's important here; it's the nature of the curb/pothole trade-off. The anti-pothole constituency is broad and is made up of a large number of people who are, for the most part, hurt or inconvenienced only slightly (although some serious auto accidents can result). Meanwhile, the anti-crumbling curb constituency is quite narrow and consists of a few people who are injured very seriously (or fear they will be). By diverting money and attention from a much more serious problem (potholes), the litigation system is undermining good public policy.

The Amazing Mays

After Douglas Schneider's antics, we were relieved to learn that the District of Columbia's Department of Transportation plans to resurface some 31 miles of streets this year. But with more than 600 miles of roads in need of repair, and 100 of those in serious condition, how would the department choose where to begin?

POTHOLES ON PARADE . . .

You Can't Compromise on Quality. According to *The New York Times*, the Jaguar-Rover-Triumph Company made plaster molds of selected New York City potholes to send back to their test course in England. Jaguar believes New York has the "finest in the world."

Washington Would Need a World's Fair. The citizens of Chauncy, Ohio, population 1,100, staged a two-day festival to raise funds to fill their potholes.

Caution: I Brake for Potholes. The American Automobile Association has outlined a procedure to minimize pothole damage: 1) Avoid hitting potholes. 2) Slow down before hitting them.

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POTHOLES ON PARADE . . .

For The Man Who Has Everything. In Falls City, Oregon, potholes have been on sale since the harsh winter of 1978. For $10 residents can "purchase" a pothole and receive a certificate from the city bearing their name and the location of their filled-in hole. The deluxe package costs $20 and includes a photograph of your pothole and the inscription of your choice in the newly poured asphalt. The city's streets now bear such messages as "Happy Birthday, Dad" and "Here's to You, Molly."

For $100 They'll Depose It. After New York City declared it was no longer liable for damage caused by potholes it didn't know about, a group of lawyers roamed the streets in their cars and found 800,000 of them. They dumped their reports on the desk of the city's legal counsel, declaring that the city had been given due notice and was now liable for damages. For $50 the lawyers will find out if the pothole that wrecked your car is registered.

The answer involves a strange beast called "The Incomparable Mays Ride Meter for Pavement Surveillance," a computer-rigged truck that is driven around to determine the degree of bumpiness of every street in the District of Columbia. The meter rates streets on a scale of 0 to 1,000, with 400 currently the standard for determining if resurfacing is needed.

A dedicated engineer named Ted Lindahl graciously offered us a ride in the Mays. "If I had my way we'd have one of those Cadillacs, but I guess we can't afford them," he told us as we hopped aboard. The "Cadillac," we learned, is a $250,000 customized version of the Mays used by West Virginia and several other states. The advantage is that it assures a smooth ride for its occupants. We laughed at first, thinking it absurd to spend money to ease the impact of bumps you were supposed to be measuring. But one jarring visit along Washington's Whitehurst Freeway was enough to change that view. Our bruises and whipsawed stomachs notwithstanding, the Whitehurst registered 263, or 137 points short of the 400 necessary to be considered for resurfacing. It made us wonder about the condition of the street that was listed as having a 996 rating. "Vast slabs of broken concrete," Lindahl answered, adding that he hopes to get money to resurface that one in 1984.

But even more curious than the "Incomparable Mays" was the Department of Transportation's decision to let the number of field workers assigned to pothole repair dwindle from 130 to around 55 in the last decade, a period in which the backlog of bad streets was growing rapidly. At the same time the department continued to protect its supervisors at headquarters and give them automatic annual raises. Were civil servants with titles like "Supervisory Booting Operations Analyst," "Traffic Enumerator," and "Counseling Psychologist" really that much more important than the people out on the streets doing the real work of the department?

Given the behavior of most government agencies nowadays, that may seem like a rhetorical question. But it became worth asking when, for purposes of comparison, we looked at the city of Minneapolis, which contains almost the same number of miles of streets as Washington.

Under Schneider, Washington killed any foundation that might have existed for an on-going preventive maintenance program. Minneapolis, on the other hand, is three quarters of the way through a 20-year plan for resurfacing *all* residential streets in the city. While Washington's workers struggle to refill potholes that are continually springing open, Minneapolis workers spend their time doing preventive maintenance to head off deterioration. Minneapolis also has a "profiling machine" that drives down the street, shaving away bumps and grinding it smooth. In Washington this task is handled by jackhammers, which is a bit like trying to dig a Metro subway tunnel with nuclear explosives.

Okay, you might say, the competition is a little unfair. Minnesota has always put the rest of the country to shame when it comes to efficiency in government. And if you stack Washington up against a New York or a Houston, it doesn't look so bad. But when you think about it, that's a lame excuse for improper repair, lack of planning, and a history of neglecting the streets for much less important concerns. When it comes to potholes, there's absolutely no reason Washington *can't* behave like Minneapolis.

A plaque at the Department of Transportation reads: THE CYNICS WHO SAY THE D.C. GOVERNMENT CAN'T DO ANYTHING RIGHT HAVEN'T SEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S FREE MAP. The plaque is right. It's a fine map, one of the best distributed free anywhere. Let's hope that in the years ahead, the streets it shows will still be around. ■

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WHO'S WHO in the Administration

Insiders say presidential advisor Michael Deaver is embarrassing his colleagues by the way he is hustling himself into a higher public profile in anticipation of his planned return to the public relations business. Deaver, complaining of having to scrape by on his present $60,000-plus salary, plans to leave government and return to p.r. next year—in plenty of time to make the best use of his White House access. . . .

Everyone has been saying what a fine fellow **George Shultz** is. We remember when he was a coward, in 1969 when he served as Nixon's secretary of labor. That year reformer **Jock Yablonski** challenged **Tony Boyle** for the presidency of the United Mine Workers. Boyle and his henchmen used bribes, embezzled union funds, rigged local elections, assaulted Yablonski supporters, and finally murdered Yablonski and his family in order to squelch the challenge. Yet despite the clear intent of the Landrum-Griffin Act, Shultz refused to lift a finger to ensure the integrity of the union elections, although Yablonski's lawyers pleaded that he do so. . . .

While Shultz's nomination breezed through the Senate, Labor Secretary **Ray Donovan** was exonerated by special prosecutor **Leon Silverman,** who concluded that Donovan's acquaintances with known mobsters didn't constitute illegal behavior. Donovan is now saying this verdict makes him an "asset" on the Reagan team, a claim vaguely reminiscent of **John Connally's** proud boast during his 1980 presidential bid that voters should trust him because he was the only candidate who'd been certified "not guilty" by a jury.

It has escaped attention that White House counsel **Fred Fielding** deserves a large share of the blame for this sorry affair. It was Fielding who forgot to tell the Senate Labor Committee that Donovan had been investigated by the FBI for possible mob links and that Donovan's Schiavone Construction Company had been described as "mobbed up" in FBI reports. Watergate buffs may recall that this is the same Fred Fielding who rifled the contents of **Howard Hunt's** safe (wearing surgical gloves). After politically explosive documents were removed, the contents were turned over to FBI Director **L. Patrick Gray,** who destroyed them. . . .

Speaking of the exonerated, Donovan now joins the illustrious company of **William J. "Not Unfit" Casey,** whose involvement in fraudulent securities practices caused a stir last year. Lou Cannon reports in his forthcoming book on Reagan that the CIA chief has yet another nickname. During the 1980 campaign Casey earned the nickname "Spacey" from senior Reagan aides for his inability to remember the dates of primaries, the names of prominent politicians, and what portions of the schedule he was responsible for. This may help explain why Reagan repaid his old friend with a job at the CIA, where the requirements of secrecy minimize the chance Casey's reputation will spread much beyond Reagan's inner circle.

In

WHITE HOUSE

Assistant Director, Office of Presidential Personnel—**J. Bonnie Newman** has been administrative assistant to Rep. Judd Gregg of New Hampshire.

AGRICULTURE

Assistant Secretary for Governmental and Public Affairs—**Wilmer D. Mizell** has been sales representative for Southern Tool Manufacturing Company.

EDUCATION

Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights—**Harry M. Singleton** has been Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Congressional Affairs.

STATE

Secretary—**George P. Shultz,** a former Secretary of Labor and Secretary of the Treasury in the Nixon administration, has been president of the Bechtel Corporation.

Deputy Secretary—**Kenneth W. Dam** has been teaching at the University of Chicago Law School.

Undersecretary for Economic Affairs—**W. Allen Wallis** has been chancellor of the University of Rochester.

Undersecretary for Security Assistance, Science, and Technology—**William J. Schneider** has been associate director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Ambassador to Zambia—**Nicholas Pratt** has been deputy assistant secretary for international organizations.

AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

Federal Communications Commission
Commissioner—**Stephen A. Sharp** has been FCC general counsel.

Environmental Protection Agency
Director, Office of Policy Analysis—**Richard D. Morgenstern** was director of the energy program at the Urban Institute.

Chief, Office of Radiation Programs—**Glen Sjoblom** has been assistant director for environmental controls for the navy's nuclear reactor program.

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Out

WHITE HOUSE

Chairman, Council of Economic Advisors—**Murray L. Weidenbaum** will return to Washington University, St. Louis.

Member, Council of Economic Advisors—**Jerry L. Jordan** will return to the University of New Mexico.

Director, Office of Policy Information—**Edwin J. Gray** will join San Diego Savings and Loan-Great American Federal Savings.

EDUCATION

Director, National Institute of Education—**Edward A. Curran** has resigned.

STATE

Secretary—**Alexander M. Haig, Jr.** resigned in June.

Deputy Secretary—**Walter J. Stoessel, Jr.**, a career foreign service officer, retired several months early at Shultz's request.

Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs—**Robert D. Hormats** has resigned.

TREASURY

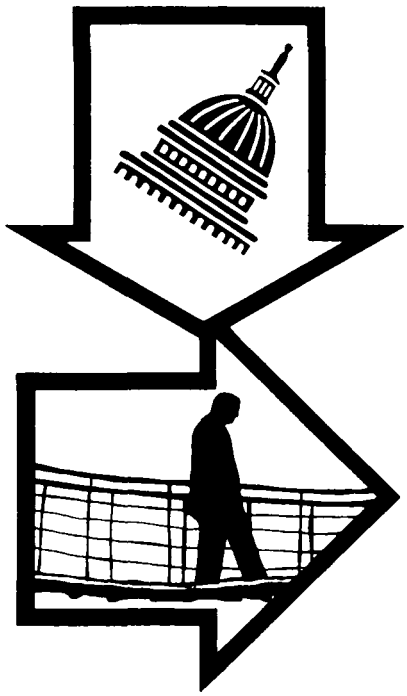
Undersecretary for Tax and Economic Affairs—**Norman B. Ture** has resigned.

AGENCIES AND COMMISSIONS

National Institute on Aging
Director—**Robert N. Butler** will head the Department of Geriatrics at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City.

National Science Foundation
Director—**John B. Slaughter** is leaving in January to become chancellor at the University of Maryland.

U.S. International Trade Commission
Chairman—**William Alberger** has resigned.



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MEMO OF THE MONTH

United States
Synthetic Fuels Corporation

June 8, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPARTMENT SODA COORDINATORS

FROM: Marty Alvord

SUBJECT: Preparation of the SODA Report

We would like to have each department prepare its contribution to the SODA report according to the attached format sheet. This will cut down on the amount of time it takes our staff to standardize the individual reports into the final version.

All submissions should be typed in final form on bond paper so that the report can be forwarded as soon as all the sections are received.

cc: ✓George
Gottlieb
Guthrie
Milch
Miller
Mulcahy
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Synopsis of Department Activity
Date
Page (do not type in a page number)

Department Name (initial capitals only)

Office Name (within that department)

- All items are to be bulleted.
- A bullet is made by typing a lower case "o" and filling it in with black ink.
- Each bulleted item addresses one issue in a sentence or a paragraph.

  If you have additional paragraphs dealing with the same issue, they are not bulleted.
- If your report continues on to a second or third page, repeat the entire heading: Synopsis of Department etc., date and page, department name, office name using initial caps and following it with (continued).
- Left hand margin settings are at 10. All bullets will be at 10. All text will be at 15.
- See example below.

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Public Disclosure

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Projects

Environment

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State and Local Government

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- etc.

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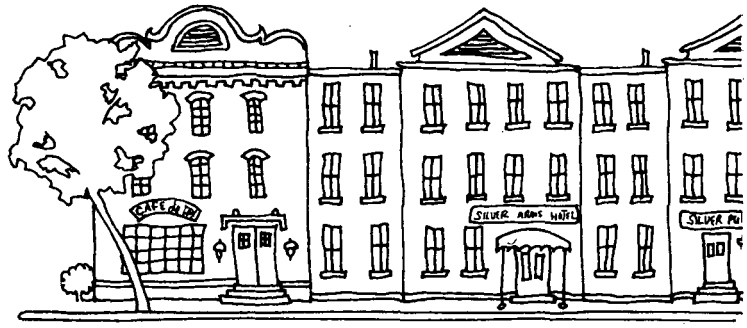
WHERE TO STAY in Washington



The West End

Its proximity to the K Street and Connecticut Avenue business district, the shops and restaurants in Georgetown, and the State Department and other government agencies in Foggy Bottom make the West End a handy place for visitors to stay. Once a residential section, condominiums and office buildings now are springing up, and existing apartment buildings are being converted into condominiums or hotels, four of which are described here.

Embassy Square, *2000 N St., N.W. (202) 659-9000; (800) 424-2999.* Within three blocks of Connecticut Avenue, K Street, and the Dupont Circle subway stop, this is one of the former apartment buildings. The rooms are simple but tasteful, and of course have kitchens—to little avail, however, as there are no cooking or eating utensils. There's a pool, sauna, and laundromat as well as valet service. The **Black Horse Tavern** serves three fairly expensive meals (no room service), but there are plenty of reasonably priced alternatives nearby. Rooms range from efficiencies to two-bedroom suites: $66-$106 single, $78-$118 double. Children under 16 stay for free; a third person in a room is $10. Parking is $4 a night. On weekends efficiencies are $39.95 a night.

Georgetown Hotel, *2121 P St., N.W. (202) 293-3100; (800) 424-2884.* Another converted apartment, the rooms are exceptionally large and have kitchens that can be equipped for no extra charge, but unfortunately none have dining areas. Among the perks: an outdoor swimming pool, a sauna, and an art gallery right off the lobby. Efficiencies are $70 single, $80 double; one-bedroom, $85 single, $95 double; two-bedroom, $200 single or double. Children under 12 are free; a third adult is $10. On weekends, efficiencies are $39, one-bedrooms $50, single or double. Parking is $4.50 a night (only 22 spaces available). **Herb's** serves three reasonably priced meals and provides room service.

Hampshire Hotel, *1310 New Hampshire Ave., N.W. (202) 296-7600; (800) 368-5691.* A block from the Dupont Circle Metro stop, this small—82 rooms—apartment hotel has experienced some sorely needed renovation since our last visit. The spacious rooms are far from elegant, but the redecorating is a marked improvement. A majority of the rooms are suites with kitchens, equipped on request. Rooms are efficiencies or one-bedroom suites: $75-$95 single, $90-$110 double. Children under 12, free; extra adults, $15 each. Thursday through Sunday night rooms are $48, single or double. Parking is $5 a night. **Hastings** serves a reasonably priced lunch and dinner as well as a continental breakfast buffet and complimentary wine and cheese every Wednesday for hotel guests only.

Ramada Renaissance, *1143 New Hampshire Ave., N.W. (202) 775-0800; (800) 228-2828.* This is one of Washington's newest and most attractive hotels. Forget everything the name "Ramada" brings to mind. The Renaissance is stylish and tasteful, from the marble, brass, and plants adorning the lobby to the contemporary decor in the rooms. Singles, $75-$95; doubles, $95-$115; suites, $150-$400 (no kitchens). On the top floor are the Renaissance Club rooms—for $125 single or double, you get a continental breakfast, a private bar in your room (you pay for what you consume), and a Club lounge that serves complimentary cocktails. On weekends you can get a room and some extras for $85 or the room only for $55, per couple per night. Children under 18 are free; parking is $5. Hotel guests can use a nearby health club for $15 a visit. There are two restaurants—**La Cloche** serves expensive French fare for lunch and dinner, and the slightly more moderate **Summerfields** serves all three meals. **La Martine** is for drinks and snacks. There are eight meeting rooms.

The Marriott, *22nd and M Sts., N.W. (202) 872-1500; (800) 228-9290.* This is the West End's convention hotel (14 meeting rooms), but if you can put up with the bustle, it's a pleasant place. The rooms are comfortable and there are plenty of leisure-time distractions—indoor pool, sauna, jacuzzi, and game room. Singles, $75-$105; doubles, $110-$120; suites, $175 single or

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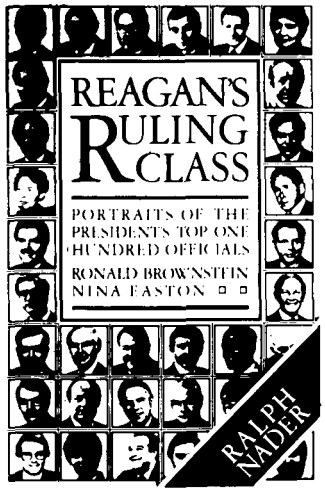
double. Children under 16 stay for free; a third adult is $10. Parking is $5. On weekends rooms are $54 a night, single or double, and a family of up to five can stay for $64 a night. Executive Level rooms are $120 single, $140 double, including a morning paper, continental breakfast, and a mini-bar rolled to your room at 5. **The Court Lounge** and **Gambit's** are for drinks and snacks. **The Atrium** serves three rather over-priced meals. **Blackie's House of Beef** has been there 36 years longer than the hotel, serving up slabs of roast beef, steaks, and baked potatoes with sour cream.

One Washington Circle, *1 Washington Circle N.W. (202) 872-1680; (800) 424-9671.* Mobil recently bestowed a four-star rating on One Washington Circle, and it's not hard to see why. A former apartment building, every room is a suite with fully equipped kitchen, dining and sleeping area, dressing room, and bath with shower massage and heat lamp. There's an outdoor pool and complimentary morning paper and shoe shine. If you plan to cook, they'll fetch your groceries. Suites range from efficiency to two-bedroom: single, $96-$160; double, $108-$175. Children under 16 are free; a third adult is $12; parking is $5.50. On weekends the rate is $60 a night, single or double, or $138 for three days and two nights and an evening at the theater. At the attractive *West End Cafe*, the prices are reasonable and the menu varied.

—Donna Fenn

Perhaps the most important political book this year!



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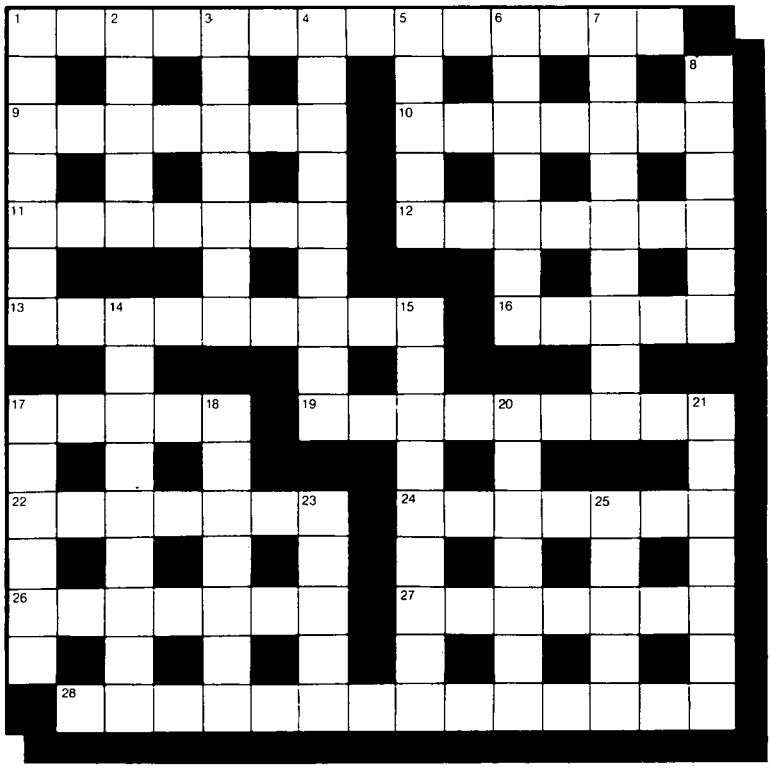
POLITICAL PUZZLE



by John Barclay

The numbers indicate the number of letters and words, e.g., (2,3) means a two-letter word followed by a three-letter word. Groups of letters, e.g., USA, are treated as one word.

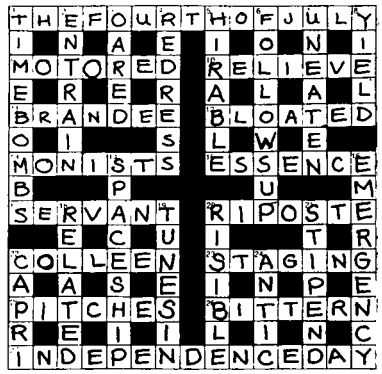
ACROSS

1. Baker or M. (8,6)
9. Undemocratic country in trouble making do merrily. (7)
10. Lists 101 in wild trees. (7)
11. Overcome prior words? (2,5)
12. Raise valet somehow in ease. (7)
13. Looked up to reorganized scree department briefly. (9)
16. Slang with blemish? (5)
17. Put the doily in the drink? (5)
19. Moses item garbled occasionally. (9)
22. Without honor they set hive buzzing. (7)
24. Pen in back in object at end of lane. (7)
26. Altered dead men weirdly. (7)
27. Protected one is under construction. (7)
28. Sample is one of 435. (14)

DOWN

1. Fight with weak arm turned. (4,3)
2. Chinese garbage scows? (5)
3. Russian honor is a sign of embarrassment? (3,4)
4. Clumsy pet's metal models. (9)
5. Big production of Elgar. (5)
6. Nice tan product for the very old. (7)
7. Another company's mattress style? (5,4)
8. Approve sanest arrangement. (6)
14. Grace's lie constituted profane act. (9)
15. Aspect created mind noise. (9)
17. Mortal angry at Hell. (6)
18. It sets apart identification in frogman. (7)
20. Dressed up in a suit in Africa. (7)
21. Moved inside point indefinitely. (4,3)
23. Iron, off or broad. (5)
25. A trip arranged for French left. (5)

Answers to last month's puzzle:



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POLITICAL BOOKNOTES

America the Poisoned. *Lewis Regenstein. Acropolis, $16.95.* Regenstein, vice president of the Fund for Animals, has a healthy contempt for at least two species: the corporate crooks and the torpid bureaucrats. Not many shades of grey here. The book is a litany of environmental disasters from water pollution to solid waste, pesticides, and herbicides.

His suggestions, while sensible, are not terribly useful. They're mostly for small, quiet choices (avoid consumer pesticides, eat low on the food chain), or for nebulously defined political change ("pressure the bureaucratic and political establishment, and persuade our leaders to do what is in their power to safeguard the public"). Okay, but how? Regenstein doesn't tell us: he isn't very interested in the arcane bureaucratic processes that lead to the continuing use of all those pesticides, or in what he rightly calls the "byzantine world of federal regulations." If he were, his book would be much more helpful.

—Forest Reinhardt

American Assassins: The Darker Side of Politics. *James W. Clarke. Princeton, $18.50.*

Big Business and Presidential Power: From FDR to Reagan. *Kim McQuaid. Morrow, $17.*

The Day is Short. *Morris B. Abram. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $14.95.* Abram's autobiography is what so many others in this genre aren't: unstintingly candid, thoughtful, and at times inspiring. A Jew who grew up in rural Georgia, Abram was a prominent civil rights advocate who argued the reapportionment case before the Supreme Court that resulted in the "one man, one vote" decision. Particularly worthwhile are his descriptions of John Kennedy's "Southern Strategy"—Abram helped free Martin Luther King from jail on the eve of the 1960 election—and his rocky relationship with Carter, whom Abram had never even heard of during the reapportionment and civil rights battles that rocked their state in the sixties. On one level this is a story of a man's political education; on another it's a highly personal and introspective tale, as Abram recounts his extraordinary recovery from acute leukemia.

—Phil Keisling

Earl Warren: A Public Life. *G. Edward White. Oxford, $25.* White's study struggles mightily with the paradôxes of Warren's career. The former chief justice of the Supreme Court was a hard-nosed district attorney who later championed rights for criminal defendants; a fervent anticommunist who fought to preserve communists' rights; and a central figure in the detention of Japanese-Americans during World War II, whose opinion in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* was the century's biggest victory over racism. What's missing are anecdotes that might have lent a more human element to Warren's evolution.

—David Jonathan Cohen

Elephants in the Cottonfields: Ronald Reagan and the New Republican South. *Wayne Greenhaw. Macmillan, $12.75.*

Forced Options: Social Decisions for the 21st Century. *Roger Lincoln Shinn. Harper and Row, $16.95.*

Haig: The General's Progress. *Roger Morris. Playboy Press.* Morris wisely focuses on Al Haig, bureaucrat, in this thoughtful biography, which should prove indispensable for those interested in why Washington's highest ranks are riddled with second-rate talents. The author, who worked with Haig for a couple of years on the National Security Council, traces Haig's rise from junior officer under General Douglas MacArthur to secretary of state, carefully detailing the various dissemblings, panderings, and outright lies that helped Haig reach the pinnacle of power, leaving little doubt that he is interested in returning there. If anyone knows Haig's heart, it's his alter ego, Richard Nixon, who recommended him as secretary of state to several Republican leaders and Reagan by telling them the general was "the meanest, toughest, most ambitious s.o.b. I ever knew."

—P.K.

Jerry Wurf: Labor's Last Angry Man. *Joseph C. Goulden. Atheneum, $14.95.* This biography of the former president of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees is a disap-

Prescriptions for Death

The Drugging of the Third World

by Milton Silverman, Philip R. Lee, and Mia Lydecker

In what one drug industry leader has called "devastating detail" the authors examine practices of multinational drug companies in the Third World. "(They) take the first, vital step of bringing the problem to public attention—where soundly and roundly substantiated, it cannot be ignored."—*Kirkus Reviews*

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pointment. To his credit, Goulden doesn't ignore the unpleasant sides of Wurf's character. Unfortunately, he fails to bring anything resembling a critical eye to the activities of Wurf's union. An explanation for this lies in the back of the book, where one learns that AFSCME underwrote Goulden's expenses and promised "to purchase enough copies from the publisher to make the book commercially feasible."

There's nothing necessarily bad about authorized biographies, though readers do deserve to be forewarned. But such books often are characterized by a tendency to indulge in petty criticism for criticism's sake, by overly long treatments of unimportant events that are meaningful to only a few people, and by a general superficiality. All these are evident here. A thorough and openminded assessment of Wurf and the controversial rise of municipal unionism still remains to be done.

—*P.K.*

Marshall: A Hero for Our Times. *Leonard Mosley. Hearst, $18.50.*

Media Unbound: The Impact of Television Journalism on the Public. *Stephan Lesher. Houghton Mifflin, $13.95.*

The Murder of Chile. *Samuel Chavkin. Everest, $13.95.* From Nixon's 1970 directive to organize a military coup d'etat to Jeane Kirkpatrick's recent praise of General August Pinochet's policies, Chavkin carefully traces the U.S. government's lack of concern for human rights in Chile. By using narratives, including those of Swedish Ambassador Harold Edlestam and victims of junta torture camps. Chavkin paints a gruesome portrait of the state of Chile under the junta. Chavkin's one excess is his portrayal of Salvatore Allende as a martyred messiah for the poor. But his main point still comes through clearly: that the quick and devastating American intervention killed any chance Allende might have had to make his socialist policies work and that his ouster should be viewed as one of the fiascos of American foreign policy.

—*Lyle Crowley*

My Harvard, My Yale. *Diana DuBois, ed. Random House, $15.*

The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto. *Mortimer J. Adler. Macmillan, $6.95.* This short, impassioned plea to improve public schools zeroes in on the two main culprits of their declining quality: poorly trained, incompetent teachers and a gradual whittling away of academic standards. His solution consists largely of an abolition of the tracking system and the institution of a basic education approach for all students regardless of their abilities. Adler is a bit naive; for example, while the belief in every child's ability is admirable, the failure to give up on a few incorrigible students and remove them from the classroom can ruin the educational experience for everyone else. But Adler's passion is refreshing, and his belief that the decline of our public schools undermines democracy is a warning that can't be sounded often enough.

—*P.K.*

The Palestinians in Perspective. *George Gruen, et al. Institute of Human Relations Press, $3.50.* This anthology of six essays on the historical background and political significance of the Palestinian Nationalist Movement offers some useful background to a complicated subject. Unfortunately, much of it is outdated in the wake of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon.

—*Jacob Weisberg*

The Passive Judiciary: Prosecutorial Discretion and the Guilty Plea. *Abraham Goldstein. Louisiana State Univ., $12.95.* Goldstein makes a good case for his argument that judges have given prosecutors too much discretion in reducing

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charges, granting defendants immunity, and offering plea bargains. Instead of looking on in tacit approval, judges should review these decisions and overturn those that are contrary to the public interest.

—*Dan Weil*

Privatizing the Public Sector. *E. S. Savas. Chatham House, $15.* The author achieved some notoriety recently as the unfortunate official who wrote an HUD draft report that was received at the recent mayors' conference about as warmly as an Ed Koch speech at a 4-H club in upstate New York. The draft called for a slash in federal aid to cities and offered this sophisticated logic: Cities decline. Cities get government aid. Therefore, government aid causes decline.

There's some truth to Savas's claim that certain government services—garbage collection, for example—can be handled more efficiently by private contractors. But Savas never hides his monomaniacal hatred for government and it destroys his credibility.

—*Michael Waldman*

Straight Talk About American Education. *Theodore M. Black. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, $14.95.*

The Superhistorians: Makers of Our Past. *John Barker. Scribner's, $19.95.*

Tax Revolt: Something for Nothing in California. *David O. Sears Jack Citrin. Harvard, $22.50.* Proposition 13 and the other property tax revolts it spawned have been subjected to very little serious scrutiny. But the conclusions are predictable, e.g., rich people supported the tax revolt more strongly than poor people. The authors go so far as to call this phenomenon the "revolt of the haves"—which happens to be the title of Robert Kuttner's far more readable and informative book on the same subject.

—*M. W.*

This Is Judy Woodruff at the White House. *Judy Woodruff, Kathy Maxa. Addison-Wesley, $12.95.*

Tumultuous Years: The Presidency of Harry S. Truman 1949-1953. *Robert J. Donovan. Norton, $19.95.*

When Governments Collide. *Wallace J. Thies. Univ. of California, $8.95.* Thies's exhaustive academic study, while a bit arcane for the general reader, is a good scholarly review of U.S. military and diplomatic strategy in Vietnam between 1964 and 1968. His major conclusions as to why the U.S. failed to force North Vietnam to end the war, however, are hardly surprising. "Could a fragmented and disjointed planning effort produce . . . the desired effect on decision-making in Hanoi?" he asks. The answer, by now at least, should be clear.

—*David Schellhase*

A detailed account of America's worst civilian nuclear power accident...

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The Department of Energy at Three Mile Island

By PHILIP L. CANTELON and ROBERT C. WILLIAMS. Afterword by Jack M. Holl. To sift out the truth that would enable them to write the history of Three Mile Island, the authors relied on unpublished materials—including logs of scientists and government officials, on interviews with participants, and on reports of government agencies. The result is a significant history, one that shows how scientists and politicians tried to deal with a highly technical event in the glare of television lights and under the inquisitive and fearful eyes of the public. Illustrated. $17.50

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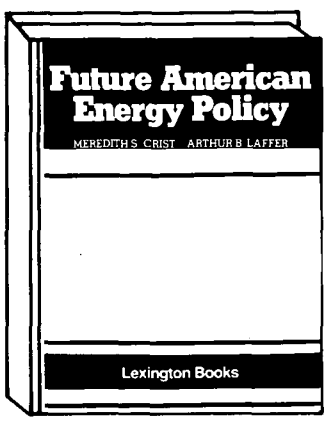

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